

A NEW TREATISE
ON THE
DUTY OF A CHRISTIAN
TOWARDS GOD.

BEING
AN ENLARGED AND IMPROVED VERSION
OF THE
ORIGINAL TREATISE;

WRITTEN BY
THE VENERABLE J. B. de la SALLE,
FOUNDER OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS.

Translated from the French,
By Mrs. J. SADLIER.

FIRST AMERICAN,
FROM THE EIGHTEENTH PARIS EDITION.

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APPROBATION

OF

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF PARIS.

HYACINTH LOUIS DE QUELEN, by the grace of God, and the favour of the Apostolic See, Archbishop of Paris, &c.

We have authorized, and do hereby authorize the publication of a book entitled "*A new Treatise on the Christian's Duty to God*," from the press of Poussielgue, Paris. This work, having been submitted to our inspection, appears to us well calculated to explain the principal duties of the Christian life, to make them loved and practised, and to apprise young people of the snares every where set to entrap the innocent.

Given at Paris, under the signature of our Vicar-general, the seal of our arms, and the countersign of our Secretary, this eighteenth day of October, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven.

J. LE SURRE,
Vicar-General.

By command of his grace the Archbishop of Paris

MOLINIER,
Secretary.

ENTERED according to Act of Congress in the year 1850,

By D. & J. SADLIER,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States, for the Southern District of New-York.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THIS work has long been a class-book in the Schools of the Christian Brothers in France and in Canada and this translation was made especially for their use, as they wish to place it also in the hands of their pupils speaking and studying the English language. The very fact of its universal adoption by these excellent masters of education is sufficient to establish its character as an unrivalled book of instruction on the whole Duty of a Christian. Here nothing is left unexplained—no point unnoticed—of all the grand and beautiful system of Religion. From the most sublime mysteries of our faith, to the simplest and most trivial practices of devotion, all is laid open before the mind, and in a way so earnest, so impressive as to produce at once the effect of rivetting attention, and inducing the mind to dwell on these all-important topics. For the rest, the purpose and object of the work are sufficiently explained in the Preface to the Original, and any further remarks of mine were sure to be superfluous.

To the principal work *The Christian's Duty to God*, is added the *Rules of Christian Politeness*, together with prayers at Mass, both being considered essentially necessary to make the book complete.

MONTREAL, October, 1850

P R E F A C E .

WHAT AM I ? WHAT IS TO BECOME OF ME ?

SERIOUS and important questions, which the man of good sense will never treat lightly, persuaded as he must be that an error on these points might be irreparably fatal in its consequences !

The idea of my existence is so closely allied with that of God, that I cannot reflect on the former without being struck by the latter. Nothing exists, except by Him who *is*, and *is* by himself ; it is in Him that we have being, motion, life, and reason. He has created us by his power, he preserves us in his goodness, and governs us by his Providence. As a natural consequence, we must, then, honour him, for his pre-eminent existence demands worship. A God, a rational man, a religion, one cannot be without the other. The idea of religion is as natural to man as is that of God : the child receives its impress with ready docility, and the old man is almost always forced to return to it. Let the passions only be silent, and all men will range themselves under the banners of Religion.

It is with the hope of being useful to all that we publish this New Treatise on the *Duty of the Christian* towards God, and the means of fitly discharging it. Every one will here find the grounds of his faith and of his future hope solidly established, and will see, by the examples which follow the explanation of the truths of faith and the duties of religion, that nothing is impossible to him who is well disposed, and desires to correspond with the graces he receives, and to avail himself of the aid which God gives " to men of good will."

Far from taking to ourselves an honour which belongs not to us, we acknowledge with pleasure that it is from the works of MM. *de La Salle, d'Humbert, and Lhomond* we have drawn up the body of doctrine contained in this New Treatise

INTRODUCTION

NECESSITY OF A RELIGION, AND THE OBLIGATION OF STUDYING IT.

1.—NECESSITY OF RELIGION.

THE existence of the universe and the admirable order which reigns throughout, necessarily suppose a wise and powerful cause.

That cause is God; He it is who has created all things, and who regulates all according to the eternal laws of His divine wisdom. Of all created beings, man alone is endowed with intelligence and liberty; he alone is capable of knowing, willing, and loving; nevertheless, God, who is wisdom itself, has only given these faculties to man to the end that they may be employed in promoting His glory.

These truths, unquestionable as they are, prove beyond all doubt the necessity of a religion, that is to say, a connexion of obedience and love from the rational being to his Creator. Vainly will it be said that God is too great and too far elevated above us to take any interest in the honour which we render Him. God, it is true, has no need of our

homage, but He is infinitely just, and therefore wills what is conformable with reason and order—hence it follows that the creature should and must honour his Creator, and testify his love and gratitude to Him who has called him into being.

Can a father possibly dispense with the love and respect which his children owe him?

God is, then, our father, hence we ought to love Him; He is infinitely good, we ought therefore to attach ourselves to Him and to His service; He is just, and He is all-powerful, and as such we ought to fear and respect Him. It was He who created us, and who still preserves our lives; all the blessings and advantages which we enjoy, we hold from His bountiful hand, and He holds ever in reserve gifts far more precious than any we have yet received; He desires to render us eternally happy—has He not then a right to require of us worship and homage?

This worship ought to be internal, comprehending all the faculties of our soul; it should be external, so that the body may concur with the soul in the worship paid to God; and public, because that men, being destined to live in society, should assemble together to bless and adore Him who has created all.

Without a fixed and unvarying system of worship, religion could not long subsist amongst men, seeing that they have so great need of mutual edification, and of exciting each other to the practice of their common duty. Thus, from the very beginning of the world, men have come together to render homage to the Lord, and every where we find the Divinity worshipped in the name of the whole people. The same light which reveals to man the existence of a Being on whom he entirely depends, shows him also

the obligation of paying Him all honour. The form of this worship has been different amongst the various nations of the earth, but its principle has been every where the same, that is to say, the necessity of honouring a supreme power, a creator and conservator—an all-disposing Providence. So true it is that man ceases not to hear an inward voice which cries: "*Homage to the Master of life!*"

2.—THE NECESSITY OF STUDYING RELIGION.

To believe in the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the rewards and punishments of the other world, or, at least, having nothing satisfactory to say against these great truths, yet to live as though one were persuaded of the contrary being the case, is an inconsistency which can only arise either from ignorance or licentiousness.

It is quite true that the most formidable enemies of religion are darkness of mind and depravity of heart. There would be fewer unbelievers if religion were better known, and there would be none—not one—were men without passions. But neither the guilty negligence of the one, nor the corruption of the other, can ever do away with that which is. Now the unanimous consent of all nations, the secret consciousness of every man,—the universe and all that it contains, are so many witnesses attesting the existence of God. The thought, the will, and the intelligence of the soul, all tend to prove its spirituality, and consequently, its immortality. Such being the case, how are we to account for the stupid indifference of those who, without precaution and without fear, dare to advance towards the fatal point which must decide their eternal doom. "I know not," say they, "what is to become of me; all that I can say is that I shall one day die, and on leaving this world I shall either fall into

annihilation like the brute, or into the hands of God to be judged by Him. I know that if there be a God, he must punish all those, who like myself take no pains to serve him: all around tells me that God does exist; nevertheless, as this belief if carried out, would thwart my inclinations and desires, I choose rather to believe only what I see!—It may be that time will not be given me to repent; of that I am reminded by the testimony of faith, and by the voice of conscience; but no matter. I shall set the evidence aside and go on in my own way, for things may not be so bad after all.” In what way can we account for the wilful blindness of him who thus sports with his eternal fate? Can he dare to flatter himself that he will share throughout eternity in the happiness of the virtuous man—he, the wicked and perverse follower of his own inclinations?—or can he imagine that the God of all justice will regard in the same light vice and virtue—the impious who blaspheme his name, and the just who adore him with awful veneration?

Of all knowledge, then, that of religion is the most important for man: it is it which moderates him in prosperity, and sustains him in adversity, teaching him that time is nothing, and eternity all; it is it that secures the tranquility of States, by making man submissive to the authorities established by God himself, and that not only from the fear of punishment, but by the obligation of conscience; it is religion which forms the clement prince and the faithful subject—the just steadfast friend. Not only does it prohibit the usurpation of that which belongs not to us, but it forbids even the desire thereof; nay, it goes farther still, and commands us to share our abundance with him who is in want; it not only condemns murder and revenge, but enjoins us to pardon injuries and love our enemies; it teaches

us to do good to those who hate and revile us, and to pray for those who persecute us. "Astonishing fact!" says Montesquieu, struck with these truths, "that religion which appears to be but for the other life, should yet constitute the happiness of man in this world."—"Society without religion" says the too-famous Voltaire, "would be but a den of ferocious beasts."

Let us then conclude that nothing is more important for man than the study of religion, since religion herself makes it obligatory on us. The first duty which it imposes on us is the study of its precepts, and if it demands implicit faith in its mysteries, it also ordains that we should examine the reasons which prove their existence. Wo, then, to him who blaspheming that of which he knows nothing, dares to despise as popular prejudices truths the most certain, and the most worthy of respect!—Truths which the noblest minds have adopted, after the most careful investigation, and yielded up to them all the faculties of their soul.

Young people, who are about to enter the world, never forget the precepts of the Church;—be faithful to your duties, nor suffer yourselves to be drawn away either by the raillery, or the example of those who have themselves unhappily deserted the path of virtue.

Read none but good books, which will instruct you more and more in the truths of Religion;—the better instructed you are, the firmer will be your faith, and the more you study your religion, the more will you be impressed with its divine beauty. Never permit your mind to be dazzled by the vain sophisms of the irreligious—never take blasphemy for reason, nor raillery for proof. Shun bad company, which cannot fail to corrupt your morals. Fly from vice, and you will preserve faith.

If in times past, you have had the misfortune to err or fall away from your duty, return at once to Him who awaits you with outstretched arms, and who never rejects those who seek His favour:—do not sacrifice your hope of eternal bliss to a mean and contemptible human respect.

EXAMPLE.—One of those Christians who have nothing of Christianity but Baptism, and who never even knew his Catechism, or had otherwise forgotten it, made it his particular request (doubtless, after a sincere conversion, and in the profound humility of his heart) that the following epitaph might be engraved on his tomb:—"Here lies the fool who departed from this world without having sought to know why he came into it."—*Extract from the Catechism of all the churches of France.*

A NEW TREATISE
ON THE
DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN
TOWARDS GOD.

AND THE MEANS OF ACQUITTING HIMSELF THEREOF.



Part First.

OF THE KNOWLEDGE AND LOVE OF GOD

1st.—OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE CREED, WHICH IS THE ABRIDGMENT OF OUR FAITH.

ARTICLE I.

OF THE APOSTLES' CREED IN GENERAL.

It was necessary that the faithful should have for their profession of faith, a regular formula, short, simple, easy to remember, and the same every where, hence it was that the Apostles, before they separated to go preach the Gospel, drew up the Creed which still bears their name, and which tradition has invariably attributed to them.

The word *Symbol* signifies a sign or an abridgment, because the profession of faith made while reciting it serves to distinguish the Christian from all others, and because it contains in an abridged form all the truths which a christian is bound to believe on the peril of his salvation.

The Apostles' Creed contains twelve articles, and is divid-

ed into three parts. The first part is comprised in the first article, and speaks of God the Father and the creation of the world; the second takes in the six following articles, and treats of the Son of God, the redemption of man and the universal judgment; and the third is composed of the three concluding articles: it speaks of the Holy Ghost, the Church, the remission of sins, the general resurrection, and of the rewards and punishments reserved for men after their death, according to the good or the evil they shall have done in the flesh.

To recite the Apostles' Creed is to make as many acts of faith as there are truths contained in it: hence, it is good and useful to recite it often, but more especially when we rise in the morning, so as to testify to God that we propose to spend the day as a Christian ought; and also when going to bed at night, in order to dispose ourselves to die in the faith of the Church, should death surprise us during our sleep: this is the reason why the church ordains that all should know it by heart, and obliges parents to teach it to their children.

The words of the Apostles' Creed are these: "*I believe in God the Father Almighty,*" &c.

EXAMPLE.—One of the tyrants of old having sought, by threats and promises, to induce the Christians to give up their faith, said to them at last: "What *do* you believe?" Whereupon one of them replied: "Listen!—I am going to make my profession of faith," and he commenced saying aloud, in a firm tone: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth," &c.

LASAUSSÉ.

Christians have been frequently heard to cry out, amid the most fearful torments inflicted on them because of their faith: "*I believe—I am a Christian. Death before unbelief.*"

There is said to be in the imperial library of Vienna, a very old Greek manuscript, containing the Apostles' Creed divided into twelve articles, with the names of those who composed them. The first is attributed to St. Peter; the second to St. Andrew; the third to St. James; the fourth to

St. John; the fifth to St. Thomas; the sixth to St. James the Less; the seventh to St. Philip; the eighth to St. Bartholomew; the ninth to St. Matthew; the tenth to St. Simon; the eleventh to St. Thadeus; and the twelfth to St. Matthias.

TEIGNOT. *Amusemens Philologiques.*

ARTICLE II.

I believe, &c.

THE NECESSITY OF REVELATION.

MAN's greatest interest is to know the end for which he is sent into the world, and what will become of him after his death; his mind, however, being so limited in its capacity, he can but imperfectly conceive spiritual things, and hence it is that he must refer himself to the exposition of them which God has vouchsafed to give him by revelation.

Of the truths which God has revealed to men, some are contained in the Sacred Scriptures, and others have reached us by means of tradition. The Scriptures are divided into the Old and New Testaments. The Old Testament comprises all the sacred books written from the time of Moses to that of Jesus Christ; and the New, those that have been written by the Apostles and some of their disciples. All these books were written by divine inspiration, and their authenticity is incontestible. There can be no doubt that their authors were really those to whom they are attributed, that they have been preserved with religious veneration, and that they have come down to us by a constant and unbroken transmission. From the very time of their sojourn in the desert, the Hebrew people have had the books of Moses;—they read them every day, and fathers transmitted to their children the knowledge they contained as the most precious inheritance they could leave them; the original was religiously preserved in the Tabernacle—and the words, nay, even the letters were counted. It would then have been impossible to introduce the slightest change, without exciting the clamorous oppo-

sition of a multitude of persons, all conscientiously bound to preserve the integrity of the narrative.

The Pentateuch, comprising the five first books of the Bible, have always been attributed to Moses by an entire nation whose religion, civil usages, and their constitution itself, were all founded on that book; so that one cannot dispute the fact of Moses being its author, without disputing the existence of that people, which would be sheer absurdity. The other books contained in the Holy Bible have the same marks of authenticity, and all of them are so closely connected that the facts related in those last written necessarily suppose the events described in the preceding accounts.

The writers of these books have all proved their divine mission by shining miracles and by prophecies which time has literally fulfilled—they must, therefore, have been sent by God. The miracles which attest the authenticity of the sacred books rest on evidence so plain that there is no possibility of their being doubted. At one time it was an entire kingdom stricken at different times with ten terrible plagues; at another, the sea opened to give a passage to the Hebrews, and closed again over Pharaoh and all his army; then it was an immense multitude fed for forty years with manna which fell from heaven, their thirst quenched with water drawn forth in torrents from the bosom of the solid rock, shaded by a thick cloud from the burning heat of the sun, and their nightly path illumined by a pillar of flame; again, it was the Jordan dividing its waters to let the people pass: at one time it was the course of the sun arrested to give time to secure the victory; at another, an entire army of one hundred and eighty-five thousand men struck dead during the night, under the walls of Jerusalem. All these prodigies, and a thousand others of a like nature, of which several were attested by solemn festivals, established expressly to perpetuate their memory, can neither be overlooked by the most stupid observer, nor called in question by the most incredulous. The people consequently were so convinced of the authenticity of the sacred writings, that they accepted the Laws therein contained with all their strictness and all their punishments—terrible as they were.

The proof which rests on the prophecies is not less strong: there we see a host of inspired men who speak not as though doubting, hesitating or conjecturing, but who, in an assured tone, publicly declare that such and such events will certainly come to pass at the time, in the place, and with all the circumstances which they point out. And what events are those? The most minute in detail, the most important, the most interesting to all the nations, and yet the most improbable at the time when they were foretold; such are the carrying away of the Jews to Babylon, after the capture and destruction of Jerusalem, then a most flourishing city; the precise term of seventy years pointed out as the duration of the captivity; the triumphant return of the people to their own land; Cyrus, their liberator, mentioned by name more than two hundred years before his birth: such, too, is the order and succession of the Four great empires, two of which were named, that is to say, the Persians and the Greeks, although these last were then cooped up in a small corner of the earth, and divided into several States. How was it that these prophets could thus penetrate the future? Who was it that discovered to their view events so distant, and then so little likely to happen, if it was not Him who is the master of time, and whose eternal decrees have regulated all? It is thus that the sacred writers have been ever regarded as the ministers and ambassadors of God; it is thus that their books came to be revered as divine, and containing the true word of God.

The authority of the books of the New Testament rests on the same foundations, and is equally incontestible.

The New Testament contains the history of the life, miracles, and doctrines of the Son of God, written by his disciples, all contemporaries of his, whose testimony is uniform throughout, and who relate but what they themselves heard and saw. From the very beginning of Christianity, the books were cited and even transcribed by the greatest men, some of whom had seen the Apostles: even the enemies of Christianity, such as Julian the Apostate, Celsus, Porphyry, have never raised an objection on this point, yet they were comparatively near to the times of the

Apostles, and consequently within reach of the truth. So also the heretics, whose interest it was to dispute the authority of these divine books, have openly acknowledged their authenticity, contenting themselves with endeavouring to pervert their sense.

The Church has ever cherished a profound veneration for these books, causing them to be publicly read in all the assemblies of religion; she has always regarded them as the word of God, and emanating from the Holy Spirit, and as such that no one could either add to, or diminish them without committing a sacrilege. If these books, then, are authentic and divine, the narratives which they contain must be true; and if so, it is quite true that God himself has spoken to men.

We must then regard all doctrine opposed to what Scripture teaches, as illusion, falsehood and error, and it is for us to oppose the word of God to the audacious license of impiety and unbelief. We should never forget that if our faith must be rational, by a due examination of the proofs on which it is based, still it can never be too humble in its submission to revealed truths, and to the explanation which the Church gives of them.

EXAMPLES.—Several persons repaired to the house of a philosopher, and said to him: "We have been sent hither to beg of you to tell us clearly what is God." The philosopher said: "I will think of it—go, and return in eight days." The eight days being past, the deputies called again, and he said once more: "Return in eight days." Eight days after they received the same answer. The deputies were at length tired of hearing from the philosopher only the same words, and they demanded to know how long he would keep telling them to return in eight days. He replied: "I must make you the same answer as often as you ask the same question. I know that God is—I know and feel that he exists, but I am not, nor never shall be able to say what he is."

"Who will explain to me what God is, if it be not God himself?"

Saint Augustine, before his conversion, went to church as

often as his occupation permitted, and above all, he never failed to go on Sundays to hear St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, preach. "They were," said he, "excellent explanations of the word of truth, and as I listened from time to time, my heart, touched by the eloquence of that holy man, became slowly awakened to the truth." He said after his conversion: "How often, oh, my God! have I been moved to tears by the melodious sounds of the hymns and psalms which they sang in church!"

The same holy doctor said: "Oh, my God! there is nothing in the world affects me so deeply as to hear thy voice speaking through the divine books of thy Sacred Scripture—it is for me a pleasure that surpasses all others. Grant, oh, Lord! that I may ever feast on thy holy word, for the delights I thence receive are all chaste and holy. Vouchsafe also to grant that I may never either deceive myself or others by taking the words of Scripture in a wrong sense." (*Confess.*, liv. 7. ch. 6.)

"What books do you read?" asked the proconsul Saturnin, under the emperor Severus, of the Confessor of the faith, Sperat. He replied: "The four Gospels of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the Epistles of the Apostle, St. Paul."

ARTICLE III.

I believe in God.

EXISTENCE OF GOD.

THAT there is a God, is a truth which makes itself evident, if one may say so, to the mind, and we have but to open our eyes and reflect a moment in order to become convinced that it is so—all that is without and around us, and all that is within us, tends to prove the fact.

Let us look at the firmament, and what a magnificent sight do we behold! Who then has made that immense vault? Who has suspended in air those shining spheres:—the sun, diffusing light and warmth on all around; the moon and the stars which shine by night in the firma-

ment, and daily renew their majestic course with the most admirable regularity !

Let us then cast our eyes on the earth, and consider the innumerable multitude of animals with which it is peopled ; the infinite variety of trees, plants, and fruits which cover its surface ; the prodigious quantity of fish which the sea contains within its bosom—who, but only God, can be the author of all these wonders ? Would it not be the height of absurdity to attribute them to chance ? When we behold a magnificent palace, we instantly conclude that some able architect must have drawn the plan, and skilful workmen carried it out ; when we look upon a fine painting, we know that an accomplished artist has conceived the design and laid on the colours. If any one told us that all this was the work of chance—that the stones of the edifice had cut and placed themselves—that the colours of the picture had come of themselves and taken their places on the canvas, and that they had shaded themselves by chance into such admirable arrangement, should we not regard the speaker as a fool ? What folly it is then to say that the universe was formed by chance alone ?

Finally, let us consider ourselves, and we shall find a body composed of an amazing multitude of springs and organs placed and arranged with the most astonishing regularity ; throughout the whole we perceive a marked design, and we see that He who called man into being has thus given him a manifest proof of his infinite wisdom. Who but God could have executed a work so admirable ?

But we have not only a body, we have also a soul ; that soul is not material, for matter is incapable of thinking—it is then of a spiritual nature. Nevertheless, the soul is united to the body, and their union is so close that when the body is in a good condition the soul partakes of its enjoyment—and, on the other hand, when the body suffers, the soul too is in pain. Who is it that has thus united and commingled two substances so different in their nature, and established that admirable correspondence between them—who but God alone ?

Again, these sentiments of joy and grief, which by turns agitate our minds, are a new proof that there is a God ; they

are involuntary, and beyond our control, for if it depended on ourselves to call them forth or banish them at pleasure, we would, undoubtedly, be always glad and joyous, never sad or afflicted.

We have, then, a Sovereign and Almighty Master on whom we entirely depend, and who disposes of us at his own will and pleasure. That Supreme Ruler is God, and hence the cry: *My God!* which escapes us in any sudden grief or pain, or when attacked by unlooked for misfortune—that unpremeditated exclamation, which proceeds not from reflection, being the involuntary “testimony of a soul naturally Christian,” according to the words of Tertullian.

It is, therefore, true that we bear within us the impress of the Divinity, traced in indelible characters; and hence, we find that there never was a nation, how barbarous or even savage soever they might have been who did not acknowledge a Supreme Power. Nations have been found utterly ignorant of arts and sciences, but none who knew not God; many, it is true, have been mistaken in their choice, but they have all and each felt the necessity of recognizing a divinity.

This universal consent and agreement of all nations and of all ages,—of men differing from each other in genius and in customs,—separated by immense intervals of time and place—this can be no arbitrary convention; it can only be the effect of a light which shines on all mankind,—a light proceeding from God himself and which even the most simple mind cannot misunderstand.

The heavens announce the glory of God, and the firmament publishes the wonders of his power. What other being could have said to the sun: “Go forth from nothing,” and illumine the day? Who but He could have bade the moon to appear, and be the lamp of night? All creatures reveal to us that they have not made themselves, but that God has made them. What other than God could make the plants to grow from the bosom of the earth, or give to seeds their wondrous increase?—Who but He could regulate the succession of days and nights, or fix the unvarying order of the seasons? All then announces to us the existence of God.

EXAMPLE.—A certain impious man, as pert in his demeanor as he was shallow in his reasoning, one day presented himself at the house of M. Oudin, a learned and pious ecclesiastic: "Sir," said he abruptly, "I am very happy to tell you that I am an *atheist*." At these words, the man of God drew back in horror; and taking hold of a spy-glass which lay near, he fixed his eye on the young coxcomb. "What are you about there?" demanded the latter. "I am examining that strange being which they call *atheist*, for I have never seen one before." Disconcerted and abashed by these words, the young man hastily withdrew.

MÉRAULT.

ARTICLE IV.

I believe in God, &c., &c.

UNITY OF GOD.

REASON and faith which make known to us that there is a God, teach us also that there is but one, and that there could not be more, because there cannot be more than one *being* who exists of himself, and depends on no other cause. And is it not evident that being supremely great, he must be alone in his power, for if he had an equal he should be no longer a Supreme Being?

All the perfections of God prove also his unity: there can be but one immense being—that is to say, who pervades and fills all space, and beyond whom there is nothing more.

There can only be one being who is infinitely perfect—that is to say, possessing all perfection, and beyond whom there is no perfection if it come not from himself.

The divine Majesty can have no equal, because it contains within itself all the plenitude of greatness.

It is, doubtless, surprising that a truth so evident should have been ever overlooked or misunderstood, and that nations otherwise enlightened should have adored a great number of divinities. This gross error was the natural effect of sin. When God created man, he made himself manifest to him from that moment man clearly understood that there

was but one Supreme Being, the Creator of all things, and on whom all things depend. Man transmitted to his posterity the pure and holy religion, which formed for a time his safeguard and preservative from evil. The first generations of men had then no need of other testimony than that of their fathers to prove the existence and the unity of God.

That tradition was, moreover, so conformable to reason, that it seemed as though it could never be forgotten, nor yet obscured. But Religion demanded sacrifices, and the corruption of the human heart became every day greater; thus according as they receded from the origin of things, the greater part of mankind rejected the ideas which they had received from their fathers, and would no longer adore what they could not see; thus the idea of God was confounded with that of the creature.

Hence they began to adore all such objects as displayed any extraordinary power, or from which they could hope or fear any thing.

The stars were the first objects of that impious worship; but great kings, conquerors, and learned men were soon installed as deities, and received divine honours.

This deplorable error made rapid progress; men sank so low as even to adore beasts and reptiles, and soon the great mass of mankind worshipped almost every thing,—save God himself.

In the dreary darkness into which he had fallen, man adored even the work of his own hands; he thought himself able to inclose the divine Spirit within the form of a statue, and so far forgot the God who had created him, that he thought he could in his turn make a god. Each nation had its own particular deities, of whom some presided in heaven, others over the seas and rivers, and some again in the infernal regions: but men did not even stop there, for in course of time even the passions and vices had altars erected to them.

Nor was this excess of folly and blindness confined solely to rude and barbarous nations, for on the contrary it reached the greatest height amongst the most polished people of antiquity,—the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans

These nations surpassed all others in learning and civilization, but as regarded Religion they were debased and degraded as has been described.

They had their great orators, celebrated poets, excellent historians, in a word they had distinguished men in every art and science, and yet they were profoundly ignorant of the nature of the Divinity. And it is worthy of notice, though we could scarcely believe it were not the proofs of it incontestible, that their error on this head, though the most absurd of all, was not only the most universal, but also the most deeply-rooted, and the most incorrigible. Some sages there were, who by deep and constant meditation, attained a knowledge of the unity of God, but they never publicly inculcated their belief.

Mankind should never have emerged from the darkness of idolatry, had not a supernatural light come to the assistance of reason, and God himself spoken to man to make known what he is, and in what manner He will be honoured. We ourselves should have been plunged in that gulf of darkness if the Lord had not vouchsafed to enlighten us also; but thanks to his goodness, we have been taught from our earliest childhood these high and holy truths which the sages of pagan antiquity never knew.

EXAMPLE.—Epictetus being asked what God is, replied: “If I were able to tell you what God really is, God should be no longer what he is, and I myself should be God. God alone can explain what he is, and that only to himself”

ARTICLE V

I believe in God, &c., &c.

THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD.

God is so great, and our mind is so limited, that it is impossible for us to understand what he is.

We know him but imperfectly, by the light of faith and by that of reason.

Nevertheless that knowledge, imperfect though it be,

suffices for man in this life. Nothing gives us a grander idea of God than that which he himself tells us: "I AM WHO AM,"—that is to say the Being of beings—the principle of all which exists, and on whom all depends. From this it follows that God is possessed of every perfection, and that in the highest degree possible.

God is a spirit, that is to say, a pure intelligence, having neither body, nor form, nor colour.

God resembles nothing of all that surrounds us, and strikes our view. All that we see, all that we touch is material, and a being infinitely perfect is not material. The angels and our own souls are so many intelligences, but their powers and capacities are limited and imperfect: those of God embrace all things.

God is eternal. He existed before all things, for He has made all; he was before all time—he never had a beginning, and shall never have an end. Before the birth of ages, God existed of himself, and he existed alone.

God is All-powerful. He can do all, whatsoever he will by his word alone he has drawn all creatures forth from nothing, and He might create a thousand other worlds if he judged it necessary.

"He calleth," says the prophet, "things which are not, and even as though they did exist, do they obey His voice." To Him then nothing is impossible, and nothing difficult. The celestial globes are suspended in empty space without other support or stay than his will; the sea obeys his orders, and never overflows its prescribed bounds, and all nature observes the laws which He has laid down. The fire, the wind, and the tempest obey his voice; it is He who covers the sky with clouds and prepares there the rain which is to water the earth; and He it is, in fine, who annually presents to our admiring gaze, the resurrection of entire nature.

God is independent. The principle of all that exists, he holds from no other being than himself. The inexhaustible source of wealth, he distributes it at his pleasure to whomsoever he pleases; supremely happy, he has need of no one, being sufficient for himself, and being the absolute master of all things, he has neither equal nor superior. For our

selves, we are continually and universally dependent on God. It is He who preserves and sustains us; without him, we must fall again into our original nothing, and without his assistance, we could do nothing.

God is immutable. What he is, he has ever been, and shall be for ever. "*I am the Lord,*" says he himself, "*and I change not.*" Man is never in a fixed and permanent condition; his body, being subject to the revolutions of the different stages of life, passes successively from strength to weakness, from health to sickness, from life to death; his will changes, either through fickleness, or because he finds a reason for seeking at one time that which he had before neglected; but in God there is neither change nor even the shadow of change.

God is infinite, that is to say that his essence and his perfections have no limits; he possesses every perfection, and in him every perfection is infinite. In his very nature he is supremely perfect. Thus God is not only good, but infinitely good; he is not only just, but infinitely just; and so with all the other perfections—as nothing has had power to limit their number, so neither can their extent be prescribed.

God is immense, because he is in heaven, on earth, and in all places. It is He who animates all, sustains all, and gives life and motion unto all. He exists in all things, or rather all things exist in Him, for His presence extends beyond the bounds of the universe: He could, if He chose, create another, and if He did, that new world would still be within the limits of His immensity.

It is, therefore, certain that we are continually under the eyes of God: He hears all our words, He sees all our actions—He is even in the depth of our heart, and knows all our thoughts and all our desires. When we do evil, it is in His presence that we do it. The thickest shades cannot conceal us from His eyes; and the darkest night is to Him the same as the brightest day. The proof of this fact is even engraved on our own heart—hence, that remorse which torments us when we have committed a bad action, even in secret, and when unseen by mortal eye. Hence the keen and piercing reproaches of our own conscience. In vain

does the sinner try to stifle them, for still does the sharp cry of that inward voice rise high over all that would oppose it vainly does he fly from his own heart, and hasten away from his own thoughts, fearful of being overwhelmed with shame before a judge which ever reproaches him with his crime: wherever he goes, he is still fearful and still confused in presence of that invisible monitor, who is incessantly reminding him of the enormity of his crime, to the end that he may begin to detest it.

Let us then never forget that God is always with us, and that we are never alone; seeing that how far soever we may be from the view of men—in the most retired place,—in the most profound solitude, we have an invisible witness who accompanies us, and who observes all our actions. This thought shall remove us from evil, for the enemy of our salvation shall be weak, and his efforts powerless, so long as we retain the remembrance of the presence of God. And how could we dare to commit sin under His eye? Could we have the beldness—the audacity to do in His presence that which we would not dare to do before a father or a master? This was the lesson which of old Tobias gave to his son: “My son,” said he, “have God in your mind all the days of your life.” It is also the advice of St. Augustine: “If any one would tempt you to sin,” says that great doctor, “make him this reply: ‘Go and find for me a place where God cannot see me; but if there be no spot wherein God is not present, then tempt me no more, for I am not wicked enough to offend Him before His face.’” That one thought, *God sees me* will support us against the attacks of the devil, it will give us strength to surmount them, and encourage us to fulfil our duties with fidelity.

God governs all things.—He cares for all creatures, and His care is called providence. Nothing happens in this world without His order, or His permission. The good which is done, is done by His order—He approves, He wills, He commands, He rewards it. The evil does not happen by the order of God, on the contrary He forbids it, and punishes those who do it; but neither does He prevent it, because He will not restrain man's will, which He has left free, and because He is powerful enough to draw good

even from evil. Let us never suppose, then, that God gives up to chance the creatures whom he has made—since he has vouchsafed to create them, it is not unworthy of himself to govern them.

This providence watches not only over kingdoms and empires—its attention extends to all creatures. “Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the knowledge of your heavenly Father: yea, even the hairs of your head are numbered,” as our Lord himself tells us. It is this overruling providence which annually covers the earth with crops, makes the plants to grow, loads the trees with fruit, and provides for the wants of all creatures with a care truly paternal. It is it which feeds the birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and the animals of the earth.

Nevertheless we are not to imagine that this universal care and attention are any trouble to God, or in the least disturb His unalterable repose. All is equally easy to infinite power and wisdom. If a king only occupies himself with great affairs, without stooping to attend to all the minor business of his kingdom, it is because that, having but a limited intelligence, he could not apply himself to smaller matters without neglecting the greater: but the wisdom of God, being infinite, embraces all without any trouble or the slightest effort.

From this principle: “There is a providence,” springs a two-fold duty for man. The first is, that he submit himself without reserve to the guidance of that providence: we are to adore it in the evil which befalls us as well as in the good—in adversity as well as in prosperity—in sickness and in suffering as in health and in joy. We ought at those times to say: “God wills it, and He wills it only for my good; may His holy name be blessed!” If He sometimes permits the virtuous man to suffer and to be in want, whilst the impious and ungodly revel in abundance, it is because he wishes to put his virtue to the test, so that he may reward it magnificently in the other life, and because he knows that this passing affliction will aid in securing his eternal salvation. The second duty is to confide in providence, and to look solely to the goodness of God for all that is necessary to us, both for this life and the other

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"Consider the birds of the air," says our Lord, "they sow not, neither do they reap; it is God himself who provides for them, and how much more for you—oh ye of little faith! Behold the lilies of the field, they sew not, neither do they spin, yet Solomon arrayed in all his glory, was not equal to one of them. If God thus clothes the grass of the field, how much more will he care for you who are his children?" It is then an insult to our heavenly Father to murmur and repine, and not to confide in His paternal care. Let us then adore His providence in all that happens to us: our fate cannot be in better hands; and never will so good a Father abandon the children who confide in his watchful care.

EXAMPLES.—We read in the Old Testament that the young Susanna was solicited by two infamous old men to commit sin. The holy woman blushing at their shameless proposal, raised her eyes to heaven, and said to them: "Whichever way I turn I am embarrassed; if, on the one hand, I consent to gratify your base passion, I shall not escape the judgment of that God who sees us all; for He is my judge and would exact from me a severe account were I to commit so vile an action. If, on the other hand, I consent not to your desire, I shall not escape your revenge, and I see plainly that you will speedily procure my death. But I fear God, and so would rather undergo every torment that your malice and cruelty can inflict than dare to offend Him in His very presence, and thus fall into the hands of His justice." The consequence was that she was condemned to death on the false charges brought against her by these wretched old men; but God knew how to testify the innocence of His servant, and the two old men suffered that death to which their unholy vengeance would have consigned her whom they could not seduce to commit sin.

This heroic firmness of Susanna was the effect of her continual remembrance of the presence of God.

Certain flatterers were extolling the power of Canute, king of England, and how did that wise prince act? He seated himself on the sea-shore just when the tide was coming in, and commanded the furious element to respect his

power. Of course he was not obeyed, whereupon, turning to his courtiers he said: "See now the extent of my power!"

MERAULT.

"Whatever affliction may befall me," said David, "I have no thought of complaining: I have no voice but to bless the Lord and sing His praises, knowing that all comes from Him who is the source of all good. If I am pursued and persecuted by Saul, *it is God who hath willed it*. If I am expelled from my palace and from my capital by Absalom, my own son, *it is God who has willed it*."

M. de Chantal, having been mortally wounded in the chase, by the imprudence of a friend, became himself the consoler of that friend, saying: "My friend, the arrow was launched above before it left thy hand."

Life of St. Jane de Chantal.

Madame de Sevigné, speaking of Turenne, said that "The cannon which killed that great man was loaded from all eternity." That thought is as true as it is energetic and forceful.

Letters of Madame de Sevigné.

ARTICLE VI.

I believe in God, &c., &c.

THE MYSTERY OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

ALTHOUGH God is substantially but *one*, there are nevertheless three persons in God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and this is what is called the Mystery of the most Holy Trinity.

It was God himself who revealed this mystery in a sensible manner at the baptism of Jesus Christ, when the voice of the Father was heard, publicly recognising him as His beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit was seen to descend upon Him in the form of a dove. Jesus Christ has also manifestly declared it, when He commanded His Apostles to baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, showing thereby that these three persons are equal, since all men must be consecrated

to all 'he three; which is confirmed by these words of St. John: "There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are but *one*."

This mystery is the grand object of our faith, and there is none of which our religion so often reminds us. All our prayers begin and end with the invocation of the Holy Trinity, and the sign of the cross which recurs so often in the ceremonies of the Church and in the individual acts of Christians, is made in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Although the divine nature then is *one* and indivisible, the three persons of which it is composed are entirely distinct, one from the other; the Son is the same God as the Father but not the same person, and the Holy Ghost, although he is also the same God as the Father and the Son, is yet equally distinct from them.

These three persons are not three Gods, but only one, because they have but one and the same divinity; thence it follows that the three are equal in all things, and that neither of them is greater, nor more powerful, nor more ancient than the others, since they have all three the same greatness, the same power, the same eternity.

This mystery, that is to say, this incomprehensible truth, is beyond the reach of our understanding, but yet it is not contrary to reason, for we say not: "Three Gods make but one God"—but only "Three *persons* forming but one God." Neither are we to figure to ourselves three persons having body and soul like unto us, for the three persons of the Godhead are purely spiritual.

The first person of this adorable mystery is the Father, the second person is the Son, begotten of the Father from all eternity, and the third is the Holy Ghost who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

This is the sum of all that it has pleased God to make known to us of the mystery of the Trinity—a mystery so sublime that the human mind could never comprehend it; but God, who is truth itself, and who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed it to us, and we are bound to believe it on the infallible authority of His word.

Nothing, in fact, is more reasonable than that we should submit our reason to the authority of God. It is not merely in things which relate to God that our reason is at fault, for even in natural things how many are there that we cannot understand, yet are they not the less certain and indubitable!

Can we conceive, for instance, how a single grain of corn thrown into the earth, produces a multitude of others? or how a dry and arid trunk can put forth an infinite variety of leaves and flowers, and fruits of the most delicious flavour, with a thousand other phenomena which nature every day presents to our eyes? When an astronomer speaks to his pupils of the immensity of the heavens, of the number of the stars, their size, their distance from us, and the rapidity of their motions; when he tells them, for instance, that the sun is fourteen hundred thousand times larger than our earth, and that it is thirty-four millions of leagues distant, they cannot understand him; nevertheless, knowing that they are yet but children, they believe it on the word of a man in whom they have confidence. When the nature of God is in question, all men are but as children. They shall one day attain the fullness of mature age; then the shades shall disappear from before their eyes, and they shall see clearly what now they can neither penetrate nor comprehend. "To attempt diving into this mystery is rashness," says St. Augustine, "to believe it by the light of faith, is the fruit of piety; to contemplate it, in the other life, is the sovereign felicity."

The soul of man is a magnificent image and reflex of the Trinity: like the Father, it has being; like the Son, it has intelligence—and like the Holy Spirit, it has love. Like the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, it has in its being, its intelligence, and its love, one and the same happiness, one and the same life. Nothing can be taken from it unless all be taken. Perfect in its being, its intelligence, and its love, it understands all that it is, it loves all that it understands, its being and its operations are inseparable. happy for it, if it can only preserve and secure its own happiness.

EXAMPLE.—Two men who were blind from their birth, were one day conversing: one of the two was ignorant

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and impious, but the other was both pious and well instructed. The impious man said: "I should like to know what was God doing for all eternity, before he created the world?" The other replied: "That is just as idle a question as if I inquired what you were doing all your life before I knew you. God was occupied with himself, and it might be thinking of creating a hell for the future punishment of those who would not believe in him, or refused to serve him." "But," said the scoffer, "I want to know how there can be three persons in God, each of the three being God, although there is but one God?—Truly it is a strange thing, and I think one is very foolish to believe what they do not understand!" "I believe firmly," returned the other, "that there is but one God, in three really distinct persons, each of whom is God, and in believing thus, I act not as a fool, assuredly, but as a wise man should!" "Prove that to me," cried the godless man, "and I will make you a present of my stick which is a very good one, and a very handsome one, too." And pray how do you know that your stick is handsome? What can a blind man know of beauty? We who are blind can realize to ourselves nothing of what they call *colour*. Who could make us understand what it is, and what constitutes the difference between red and yellow, green and blue? Are we then to deny that there are colours, and that there is a difference between them, until we can understand what that difference is?" "Certainly not," was the reply, "we have so many reasons for believing it—all men who are not blind tell us so." "And so there are men who tell us that there *are* colours, and we believe them, but it is a God who has revealed to us the mysteries of which we spoke just now, and yet we will not believe him! Have we not much more reason to believe in the existence of the Holy Trinity, and in all the other mysteries, than in the existence of colours? The Christian religion, which teaches us all the mysteries of faith, is divinely demonstrated—go and learn them of her! If we believe during life, and die as Christians should, we shall go to heaven, and once there we shall be no longer blind. Then we shall see God face to face and as he really is.

ARTICLE VII.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and Earth.

OF THE CREATION.

THIS world which we here behold, has not always existed, and this fact is sufficiently manifest, being proved in various ways. In going back towards the period of creation, as determined by the Holy Scriptures, we see that every thing commences—arts, sciences, nations and empires. There is no monument, no fact, no history to tell us that the world had previously existed. The book which refers the creation of the world to that precise date is itself the most ancient of all books, and like all other portions of the Bible, it is the most authentic, and the most worthy of belief. The first word of that book is *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*, that is to say, that he made all things of nothing. God had existed of himself, and nothing existed but only himself. At the moment when he willed it, the heavens and the earth came forth from nothing; he created them solely by his word and by his will. “*God spoke*,” says the Scripture, “*and all was made, he commanded, and the universe was created.*” The voice of God is no other than his Almighty will.

Let us transport ourselves in spirit to the moment of the creation, and with what astonishment should we not have been struck on beholding at every word of the Almighty a multitude of creatures spring into existence, each fair and perfect in its kind!

God employed six days in this great work: but he could have done it all in an instant, had he not designed to show us that he is supremely free, and acts without any restraint, in whatever way seems good to him.

On the first day, God created the heavens, the earth, and the sea. He then said: “*Let there be light, and the light was made.*” Words how simple, but how full of power and of majesty!

The second day, he created the firmament, or that immense dome which we call the heavens. “*Let there be a*

firmament made," said the Lord, "*and the firmament was made!*" But the firmament was then without splendour, for the sun and the stars which rendered it soon so brilliant, were not yet made: it was then like a vast pavillion, without ornaments of any kind.

On the third day, God gathered together the waters which had been spread abroad every where, and He commanded the earth to bring forth her plants and trees. At his word, an arid and sterile surface became suddenly a smiling landscape, interspersed with verdant meadows, rich vallies, hills and mountains crowned with forests, the whole strewn with flowers and fruits of every species; and what is more wonderful than all, is, that each plant received at the same time the power to re-produce itself by the seed which it contains.

On the fourth day, God created the sun and the moon, and adorned the firmament with that multitude of stars which strikes the eye and astonishes the mind.

The fifth day, He created the fishes and the birds; He said: "*Let the waters bring forth the creeping creature having life, and the fowl that may fly over the earth under the firmament of heaven;* and these words filled the sea with inhabitants, and peopled the air with an infinite number of birds.

On the sixth day, God created the animals: "*Let the earth bring forth the living creature, in its kind,*" and thus were created the numberless animals which inhabit the earth, from the smallest worm to the enormous elephant, from the bee which hums through our gardens to the eagle which soars over the mountains; from the smallest insect to the monstrous serpent, the terror of the desert; and from the imperceptible animalcule to those living mountains which agitate the seas. What admirable variety in their forms and in their inclinations! To some He gave strength, to others industry, and to all he gave the qualities necessary for fulfilling their destiny. Finally, all the other creatures being formed, God resolved to give them a master, and He then created the first man whom He named Adam.

EXAMPLE.—There can be nothing more ridiculous than the systems of the ancient philosophers on the origin of the

world. Some thought the world eternal, others have attributed its formation to chance. Democritus, who retired into the tombs, to the end that his meditations might not be disturbed by the conversation of the living, attributed the creation of the world and even the liberty of man to the accidental meeting of atoms. This system, which was also that of Epicurus and of Lucretius, is a disgrace to the human mind. According to Thales, the origin of all things is owing to water; according to Anaximenes, it is to air, while Heraclitus believed it to be from fire.

One philosopher pretended that man was born of the foam of the sea, heated by the rays of the sun; another, that he came of the oyster, which being matured, became a fish, the fish became an amphibious animal, which in its turn became a quadruped, the quadruped became an ape, and the ape, in its perfect state, became a man.

THOMAS

CHAPTER II.

OF THE ANGELS AND OF MAN.

THE angels and man are the most perfect creatures whom God has created, because they alone are gifted with intelligence, and capable of knowing and loving their Creator, and also because they are destined to be eternally happy in possessing him.

ARTICLE I.

OF THE ANGELS.

ALTHOUGH there is nothing said of the angels in the account of the creation, it is believed that they were created on the first day, when God said: "*Let light be made.*" This is the opinion of St. Augustin. "God made the angels in heaven," says the Holy Scripture, "and he created an innumerable multitude of them."

The angels are pure spirits, that is to say, intelligences which are not destined, like our souls, to be united with bodies.

The word *angel* signifies *messenger*, and we find in Sacred Writ a great number of occasions on which these blessed spirits were sent as deputies to man: the archangel Gabriel was sent to Zacharias and to the Blessed Virgin; Raphael to Tobias and others, and we know that Abraham, Jacob, Gideon, Moses, and several other personages of the Old Testament were favoured with angelic visions. The angels are represented with wings, to show the promptitude with which they execute the orders of God.

All the angels were created free, consequently all could have remained faithful and merited the happiness for which they were destined; but the first amongst them, called *Lucifer*, because of the radiance with which God had adorned him, chose to forget all that he owed to his Creator, and would become his equal. A great number of the heavenly spirits followed his example, but a far greater number ranged themselves with the archangel St. Michael, who smote and overthrew the rebels, crying, "*Who is like unto God?*" Who is like unto him—great, powerful, holy, merciful and just?

Thus these wicked spirits were precipitated into hell, where they shall be tormented for all eternity.

In order that we may have an opportunity of proving our love for him, and of earning a greater reward, God permits us to be tempted by these spirits of darkness; but he gives us at the same time the graces which may enable us to resist them. We can ward off their attacks by watchfulness and prayer, and subdue them by the merits of Christ's sufferings and death.

The angels who remained faithful were confirmed in grace, and entered into the joy of the Lord, to be blest for all eternity, in the contemplation of his adorable perfections.

There are three hierarchies of these celestial spirits, and each hierarchy contains three different orders.

The first hierarchy comprises the Seraphim, the Cherubim, and the Thrones; the second, the Dominations, the Virtues, and the Powers; and the third, the Principalities, the Archangels, and the Angels.

We know, by the sacred writings, that the occupation of

the angels is to adore God and sing his praises; also, to present to him our prayers, and to protect those who invoke their aid.

We should cherish a great respect for all these blessed spirits, but we ought especially to honour our guardian angels. We learn from the lips of Christ himself, that even the smallest child has one of these heavenly spirits to guard and guide it. What a consolation it is for us to be assured that we have ever near us a protector sent by God from heaven, to watch night and day over our safety, and to shield us from the malignant attacks of the angel of darkness; that we have in him a true friend, who is faithful, wise, enlightened and powerful—a sure and safe guide, who is at all times desirous of conducting us onward in the way that leads to heaven! Should we ever forget what the angels do for us: and shall not the remembrance thereof open our hearts to sentiments of respect, gratitude, confidence and love!—Will it not induce us to be docile to their inspirations—to pray to them often and with sincere devotion, and to imitate them in their fidelity to God!"

EXAMPLE.—After the return of the Jews from captivity, the holy man Tobias, believing himself near his end, and desirous of recovering for his son a considerable sum which he had lent to one of his relations, named Gabelus, advised him to seek a faithful guide to conduct him to Ecbatana, where this relation lived. The young Tobias having gone out for this purpose, encountered the archangel Raphael, under the form of a wayfaring young man, who immediately offered to be his guide. When they had arrived near Rages, the heavenly conductor informed Tobias that God willed him to espouse Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, one of his own relatives. On hearing this, the young man was struck with fear, remembering that Sarah had already been the wife of seven husbands, who were all dead. The angel reassured him, however, promising that no evil should befall him if he would only take his advice, which Tobias faithfully did.

Gabelus, being invited to the wedding, brought with him

the sum which he owed Tobias, and after a few days, the travellers set out to retrace their way to Palestine.

Being returned to the paternal house, the young Tobias adored God, according as he had been admonished by the angel; then approaching his father who was blind, he rubbed his eyes with the gall of a monstrous fish which he had caught in the Tigris during his journey, whereupon the holy old man was instantly restored to sight.

When he had thus fulfilled his mission, the angel made himself known, saying to the elder Tobias: "The Lord hath sent me to heal thee, and to deliver Sarah, thy son's wife, from the devil. For I am the angel Raphael, one of the seven who stand before the Lord, ever ready to execute his will. When you prayed and wept, and when you were burying the dead, I presented your prayers to God, and he was pleased to receive them favourably; therefore, and because you were pleasing to God, it was necessary that you should be tried by suffering." He then said: "Peace be with you!" and disappeared. These services rendered to Tobias by the archangel are emblematical of what our guardian angels daily do for us.

ARTICLE II.

OF MAN.

IN order to distinguish man from the other visible creatures, God seemed to re-collect himself before creating him: "*Let us make man,*" said he, "*to our own image and likeness.*" His body he formed of the slime of the earth, and then he infused into him an intelligent soul, capable of loving, willing and thinking—and it is in this that man resembles God, and is capable of possessing him for all eternity, if he render himself worthy of that happiness by the practice of those virtues marked out for him.

It became necessary for the first man to have a companion: she was taken from his own side and received the name of Eve, and thus was marriage instituted. All men are descended from these first parents, and ought therefore

to form but one and the same family, loving each other as the children of a common father.

Man does not consist of a material body only; he has a soul capable of thinking and of loving,—a soul whose nature is incorruptible and which is destined to live forever

EXAMPLE.—One of the Roman emperors had a stag which his people had succeeded in taming. He was fed at the palace, whither he returned every day, after having visited the neighbouring forests. This animal was highly prized by the emperor, who, fearing that he might stray away where some one not knowing to whom he belonged, might give chase to him and wound him, he had a golden collar put around his neck, with the inscription: "*Touch me not; I belong to Cæsar.*" We come from God—we belong to God—we are his property. He has marked us with his seal; our soul and its faculties, our body and all our senses bear the impress of the Divinity. Let us then never be led away by bad example, or taken captive by the spirit of malice, our great adversary acting through the medium of our passions.

ARTICLE III.

OF THE SPIRITUALITY AND IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

It is not only the faithful of the New Law who profess to believe in the immortality of the soul; for the patriarchs and prophets of old, and all the adorers of the true God have believed it, and made that belief the motive of all their actions. The great men of antiquity, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and a multitude of others, discovered by the light of reason, aided by some traditional remembrances, that death is not the end of all man's nature, but that he still survives to himself, after having undergone that final stroke, which is, in reality nothing more than the separation of the two substances—the body and the soul, which constitute his being.

And in fact, we can no more doubt that our nature is composed of two substances, than we can doubt our own

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existence, for, most assuredly that which thinks within us, which meditates, calculates, compares, reflects—that which is capable of such an endless variety of knowledge and of sentiments cannot be material. But the doctrine of the soul's immortality rests not on simple conjecture, nor on mere probability: the primitive revelation, the general conviction of mankind, the idea which God has given us of his goodness, of his power, and of his justice; these are the foundations of a truth as consoling for the good, as it is dreadful for the wicked.

After his sin, man was condemned to death, and his body was to return to the dust whence it was taken; but if his soul were to perish with his body—if that principle of life emanating from the Creator was to be annihilated, then the promise of a Redeemer was absurd and unmeaning. So the dogma of a future life, and the consequent immortality of the soul was always one of the fundamental articles of the primitive religion,—it was the joy and hope of our first parents, as it will also be ours if we faithfully observe the commandments which the Lord has given us.

The belief of a future existence and that of the immortality of the soul, has been generally received by all the nations of the world; idolatry, far from destroying it, had given it new strength, or rather it was the very abuse of that belief which formed one of the sources of idolatry for the apotheosis of great men, and the custom of paying them divine honours after their death would never have been established, if they had believed that death ended all—both soul and body.

In creating a being of such vast capacity as our soul, God could have had no other part than that of rendering it happy in the possession of something worthy of it, and of its works. Is happiness to be found in this world? Is the most virtuous man always the happiest? Alas! we see by daily experience that the contrary is the case.

The divine justice is yet another proof of the immortality of the soul: often do we see in this world, vice triumphant, and virtue humbled to the lowest pitch—the impious happy, and the just unhappy. It is then absolutely necessary that order should be re established—that vice should be punish-

ed and virtue rewarded. But how would that order be established, and the divine justice exercise its rights, if the soul were not immortal?

It will perhaps be said that remorse is the punishment of crime; but what would remorse be without faith? We may then conclude that to deny the spirituality of the soul, and its consequent immortality, is to falsify not only the belief and the opinion of all nations, but even reason and common sense.

This truth, professed in all ages and by almost all nations, is, doubtless, a fearful truth for the impious; it pursues him go where he will, and rends his very heart, notwithstanding all his efforts to shake it off. The free course which he gives to his passions, makes him dread that eternity from which he has nothing good to expect; he would fain not believe, but remorse pursues him—he doubts, but cannot persuade or convince himself. Hence it is that incredulity betrays a guilty soul. “When the thought of the future arises before the unbelieving,” says Young, “they shrink—they tremble—they doubt—and believe.”

The just, on the contrary, find in this belief that strength which enables them to bear patiently the sufferings and afflictions of the present life—it is, moreover, his hope for eternity.

EXAMPLE.—Some hours before his death, Bernardine de St. Pierre, author of *The Studies of Nature*, seeing his children weeping around his bed, addressed to them these touching words: “This is no more than a separation of some days—do not, I pray you, render it so painful to me. I feel that I am quitting the earth, but not life. Farewell, my beloved ones!—shun evil—do good—live as Christians and we shall one day meet again.”

ARTICLE IV.

THE FALL OF MAN.

WHEN man came forth from the hands of his Creator, he was just, holy, happy, and adorned with many excellent gifts, his mind being also illumined with a divine light, re-

vealing to him all that he ought to know. For his instruction neither books, nor masters were required. His will was right, and without any tendency to evil; nothing disturbed the tranquillity of his soul: his body was not subject to pain, or any inconvenience, and he was not destined to die.

Nevertheless, the majesty of God required of man the devotion of his heart, and proofs of his love and of his obedience: hence it was that when placing him in the terrestrial paradise, he forbade him to touch one particular fruit, giving him, however, the use of all the others. This one commandment, so easy to be observed, especially at that time when man was still innocent, and had no leaning towards evil, being on the contrary, rather inclined to good, was accompanied by the most fearful menace, nothing less, indeed, than the penalty of death. But notwithstanding all the favours which they had received from God, and disregarding his threats, the woman allowed herself to be seduced by the devil, who had taken the form of a serpent; and having herself eaten of the forbidden fruit, she offered it to Adam, and involved him in her own disobedience.

From that moment all was changed for them, and they lost all the advantages which God had given them at their creation. Their souls were overspread with darkness; their will became perverse; passion obscured the light of reason, and their inclinations became corrupt and tending to evil. In losing their innocence, and separating themselves from God they exposed their souls to eternal damnation, while their bodies became subject to pain, sickness and death.

The frightful consequences of the sin of Adam have passed to all his descendants, because that his sin has itself fallen on all men, who are descended from him. When he disobeyed God, he destroyed himself, and with himself, all mankind, whose father he is. We are now the inheritors of his crime and of his disgrace, as we should otherwise have been of his innocence and bliss.

All have sinned, through the first man, and all have disobeyed in him; so that his sin, transferred to us, makes us all guilty, even before our birth. An incomprehensible truth this is, but it is one that religion permits us not to doubt. It is, in fact, the fundamental dogma of the Chris-

tian religion—the dogma to which she entirely refers, because that sin, which is the source of all our evils, is also the primary cause of the need which we had of a Mediator and a Saviour, to reconcile us with God, to expiate our sins, and to redeem us from slavery. It is also one of the dogmas most clearly set forth in the Sacred Scripture.

The holy King David says himself that he was born in iniquity, and that his mother had conceived him in sin.

The Apostle St. Paul says that by one man sin has entered into the world, and by sin, death; and that all men have thus been made subject unto death, because through that one man all have sinned.

We are all born guilty, and children of wrath, and hence that first sin, in which we are born, is called original, or transmitted sin.

The pagan philosophers themselves, with no other help than their own reason, suspected that man must be born under some sort of guilt, although they could not attain the knowledge of the truth as we know it. It was the sight of the many miseries which he has to endure from his very birth, that brought them to this conclusion. In fact, without the belief of original sin, man is himself a mystery still more incomprehensible, for how are we otherwise to account for all the contradictions which are found in him? So much greatness and so much meanness—so much intelligence and so much darkness—so earnest a desire for happiness and such profound wretchedness. He approves of virtue, yet he practises it not—he condemns evil, yet commits it in every possible way.

It is only the doctrine of original sin which can explain away these difficulties, and reconcile these contradictions.

All that there is in man of goodness and of intelligence comes from God, and is the remnant of our nature as it was first created, like the mouldering remains of some noble building, beautiful even in decay. Ignorance and vice are the effects of sin, which has disfigured the fair work of God, and defaced his image so that it can now be scarcely, if at all, recognised.

Of this same rigorous justice we behold an example when a king punishes a rebellious subject by degrading

himself and all his posterity. Nevertheless, comparisons drawn from human things are always imperfect. The laws of human justice are but the shadow of the laws of God; and though they may assist our faith, they can never reveal to us the depth of that impenetrable mystery.

God has created man, to render him and all his posterity eternally happy. He came from his hands just and holy, and it rested with himself to retain these blessings and transmit them to his descendants, by remaining faithful to his God. Had he but persevered in righteousness, he would have communicated his own happiness to all his offspring; and ensured to them a happy eternity; but his disobedience has ruined all, and the consequences of his sin, that is to say, ignorance, concupiscence, the misery of life, the death of the body and the loss of the soul, have all fallen upon us. Thus we should have been forever shut out from heaven, if God, in his infinite mercy, had not provided a remedy for our misfortunes by sending a Redeemer.

EXAMPLE.—And the Lord God called Adam, and said to him: "Where art thou?" And he said: "I heard thy voice in Paradise; and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." And He said to him: "And who hath told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" And Adam said: "The woman whom thou gavest me to be my companion, gave me of the tree, and I did eat." And the Lord God said to the woman: "Why hast thou done this?" And she answered: "The serpent deceived me, and I did eat." And the Lord God said to the serpent: "Because thou hast done this thing, thou art cursed among all cattle, and beasts of the earth: upon thy breast shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." To the woman also he said: "I will multiply thy sorrows, and thy conceptions: in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children, and thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee." And to Adam he said: "Because thou hast

hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat, cursed is the earth in thy work : with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee ; and thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth, out of which thou was taken : for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return."

Genesis, chap. iii.

CHAPTER III.

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST.

ARTICLE I.

THE PROMISE OF A SAVIOUR.

MAN was lost without resource, if God had not taken pity on him : he had offended infinite majesty, and was, therefore, unable to repair his sin, since he could not offer any satisfaction at all equal to the offence.

But God, through his own gratuitous mercy, whose workings are as incomprehensible as those of his justice, even before He pronounced Adam's condemnation, gave him the hope of a Mediator while cursing the serpent of whom the devil had made use in order to deceive our first parents ; and He promised that from the woman should one day spring him who was to crush his head, that is to say, him who was to destroy the power of the demon. In this sense was the promise regarded by our first parents and by their descendants after them.

It was not till four thousand years had passed away that this promise was fulfilled. God had reserved to himself that long interval for its development, and for repeating it more clearly, and in a more explicit manner. In fact, the promise which God had given to Adam was subsequently confirmed by that made to Abraham, who was destined to be the father and the root of a nation

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peculiarly consecrated to the worship of God. "Go forth," said the Lord to him "from thy own country, unto the land which I will show thee. I will make of thy descendants a numerous people, and all nations shall be blessed in thy seed." The promise was renewed in the same words to Isaac and to Jacob. The latter, enlightened from above, predicted more clearly the coming of the Liberator promised from the beginning of the world; he even pointed out the period of that great event, when, being on his death-bed, and announcing to his twelve sons assembled around him, what was to happen to their posterity in the lapse of ages, he addressed to Juda, his fourth son, these remarkable words: "Juda, thee shall thy brethren praise:—the sons of thy father shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not be taken away from Juda, nor a ruler from thy race, till He come that is to be sent, and He shall be the expectation of nations." Thus was the promise made first to Adam and afterwards to Abraham, developed and made more manifest.

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The Saviour was to be born of the family of Juda, and the time of his appearance was indicated—when the sceptre, that is to say, the pre-eminence, or principal authority, should be taken from the house of Juda.

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Three hundred years after the death of Jacob, God, wishing to deliver his people from the yoke of the Egyptian oppressor, raised up Moses, whom he filled with his spirit, and endowed him with the power of working miracles.

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That holy man, having guided the people even to the borders of the promised land, and feeling himself at the point of death, assembled the Hebrews, and renewed to them the promise of a Liberator mightier than he; one who alone could introduce them into the true land of promise, of which Canaan was but the figure. Thus God still kept his people in expectation of the Saviour promised to their fathers.

This prophet, greater than Moses—the Saviour of his people, and the author of a new dispensation—the mediator of a new covenant, before whom Moses himself sank into insignificance, and who was to be heard before all others—this was the Saviour of the world, whose doctrine was one

day to enlighten the universe, and of whom God himself was to say: "This is my beloved Son—hear ye him."

Before Him, there had not appeared in all Israel, a prophet like unto Moses, with whom God conversed face to face, and deputed to give the law to his people.

EXAMPLE.—One day when Daniel was pouring out his soul before the Lord, and praying with fervour for his people, the angel appeared to the Prophet, and instructed him, by God's command, as to the time when the Messiah, whom he called *the Eternal Justice*, and *the Holy of Holies*, was to appear on the earth; and also of the period when that same Christ, so long promised and so long looked for, should be put to death. He told him that God had vouchsafed to grant him that signal favour because he was "*a man of desires*."

Daniel, chap. ix.

ARTICLE II.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROMISES.—FUTURE CONVERSION OF THE GENTILES.

WITH the single exception of the Jews, all the nations of the earth were sunk in the darkness and confusion of idolatry. God was entirely forgotten, and the devil adored under divers forms. That impious worship had been secured and strengthened during a long course of ages; all the passions, which it so highly favoured, had in their turn served to support and maintain it, until it seemed as though mankind was never to emerge from an error so ancient, so universal, and so firmly believed. But God had resolved to destroy the empire of the devil, as he had promised Adam, and to recall men to the knowledge of the truth.

So great a renovation was to be the work of the Messiah; and one of the most sensible characteristics of his coming was, that by enlightening all nations he was also to convert them. God had not concealed this future blessing for the Gentiles, for all the prophets had seen it by a divine light, and had foretold it in many different ways, several ages before it was accomplished, and even at a time when it seemed incredible.

They all announced that the Messiah would dispel the darkness which, till then, would cover the earth; that he would enlighten the Gentiles; that he would liberate them as well as the Jews, and that of both, he would form one people, adorers of the true God. These prophets were the heralds whom the great King sent before his Son, to apprise men of his coming.

God pointed out all the characters which were to be reunited in the person of the Saviour. He foretold, by his prophets, all the circumstances which accompanied his birth, his life, his death and his resurrection; so that the history of the Saviour was written ere yet he had come into the world. David, that holy and inspired king, is one of those who foretold him in the clearest manner. He calls the Messiah his Lord, and recognizes him as the Son of God; he predicts that all nations shall own his sway, and that his dominion shall extend over all the universe. He announces his ignominy, his cruel death, and the species of torments which he was to undergo: he saw his hands and feet pierced, his body suspended in the air, his tongue moistened with vinegar and gall; his garments divided, and his robe drawn by lot; but at the same time he declares that he shall not be subject to the corruption of the grave, from which he was, on the contrary, to come gloriously forth. This prediction is the more remarkable that it was made, fully a thousand years before the period of its fulfilment.

Isaiah, too, spoke plainly of the Messiah. He saw him spring from the root of Jesse, and receive his birth from a virgin mother; he calls him a wonderful child, the father of a future age, the prince of peace, and finally, he styles him *Emmanuel*. "His reign shall be eternal," says again the same prophet, "all nations shall bow down before him; at his word the lame shall walk, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the blind see, and the dead shall come to life again."

But after having spoken of the glory of the Messiah, he speaks also of his humiliations: he represents him disfigured, unknown, and despised as the most abject of men; he calls him "the man of sorrows," laden with infirmities, for that having taken upon him our iniquities, he must expiate them by his sufferings. "They shall spit upon his face,"

says he; "he shall be treated as a malefactor, led to execution with the wicked; and he shall give himself up to be slaughtered, peacefully as a lamb." The prophet adds that by his death he shall become the head of a numerous posterity, and predicts that the Gentiles shall hasten from all parts of the earth to follow in his train, whilst the Jews, with few exceptions, shall be rejected, because of their incredulity. Where could we find a more detailed account than this, save in the Gospel—the written history of the Saviour? And yet this prediction was made more than seven hundred years before the birth of Our Lord.

The other prophets foresaw the mystery of the Messiah with equal clearness. Thus, one of them predicted that Bethlehem, the smallest city of Juda, should become illustrious by his birth; another predicts that he shall be sold by one of his disciples for thirty pieces of silver, and even mentions the potter's field, purchased by that money. The same prophet represents him to us as a king, though a poor one, he being to enter Jerusalem seated on an ass, even in the time of his triumph.

The prophet Aggeus publishes the glory of the second temple, because that the Messiah, the Desired of nations, was to sanctify it by his presence.

The prophet Daniel determines the precise period of his coming: that prophet being occupied with the captivity of his people and the seventy years during which it was to continue, he was suddenly elevated by the spirit of God to higher thoughts, and predicted that after seventy weeks of years, that is to say, four hundred and ninety years, there should be an end to a captivity much more grievous, from which mankind was to be freed by the death of Christ: deliverance which was to consist of the remission of sins, and the eternal reign of justice. He announced that in the last week Christ would be put to death; that a new alliance was to be confirmed, and the ancient sacrifices abolished. "After the death of Christ," adds the prophet, "there shall be nought but horror and confusion: the holy city and the sanctuary shall be destroyed; the people who despised him shall be no longer his own; abomination shall

be seen in the temple, and a desolation which shall continue even to the end.

Finally, Malachy, the last of the prophets, predicted that "*instead of the ancient sacrifices, a pure offering shall be presented to the Lord, not alone in the temple of Jerusalem, but from the rising to the setting of the sun; not only amongst the Jews, but also the Gentiles, amongst whom the name of the Lord shall be great.*" These prophecies are all contained in the sacred books, whose authenticity is attested by the irrefragable testimony of a whole people. These are the Jews, the declared enemies of Christianity, who cannot help respecting them, although they find therein their own condemnation; it is from them that we have received them, and it would seem as though God had preserved that nation amid the ruin of so many others that it may render its unwilling testimony to the authenticity of the Sacred Scripture, so as to place it above all suspicion of forgery or even of alteration.

In order to convince the most incredulous, of the divinity of Jesus Christ, and to establish the fact that this Divine Saviour is really the Messiah foretold by the prophets, we have but to compare the marks which were to distinguish the Desired of nations, with the events which took place at the coming of Christ. We have only to bring together the prophecies and their fulfilment, keeping one hand on the Old Testament, and the other on the New: the resemblance will be found so close that there is no possibility of being mistaken. In the first place there can be no doubt that at the period of the birth of Christ, the expectation of the Messiah was generally diffused, not only through Judea, but over all the East. This fact is attested even by the Pagan writers. "It was," says Suetonius, "an ancient and constant opinion in the East that about that time Judea was to send forth conquerors who should subjugate the entire world." Tacitus relates the same thing. "Many were persuaded," says that historian, "that in those days Judea was to give rulers to the world." This general expectation was based on the famous prophecy of Jacob, who had foretold that the Messiah would come just when the Jews should cease to be governed by the princes of the

house of Juda; and also on that of Daniel, who had fixed the period of the birth of Christ at the end of four hundred and ninety years. These terms of the prophecies were taken in their literal sense by the carnal Jews and by the Pagans, who confounded the spiritual dominion of the Messiah with the sway of a conquering prince. The prophecy, however, is none the less real, and the fact is that the Apostles, going forth from Judea, *did* subdue the nations, and bring them under the law of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel points out to us the literal accomplishment of all the prophecies which were to characterize the coming of the Messiah; he was born in Bethlehem; he gave a new code of laws; he wrought the most astonishing miracles; he sanctified the temple by his presence; he died amid the torments and ignominy of the cross, and arose from the dead on the third day, &c.

EXAMPLE.—The knowledge of the true God was still preserved in the kingdom of Ethiopia; Candace, who was queen of that country at the time of the Apostles, sent one of her officers with gifts to the temple of Jerusalem, and to adore the Lord in his holy house. This prudent minister was on his way back, after having done his errand, when as he journeyed along, reading the prophecy of Isaiah, it pleased the Lord to order Phillip, the deacon to hasten after him. The officer was just reading that saying of the prophet: "*He shall be led like a lamb to the slaughter.*" "Thinkest thou," said the man of God, "that thou understandest what thou readest?" "How can I," said the officer, "unless some one show me?" and having invited Phillip to mount beside him, he begged of him to tell him whether the prophet in that passage, spoke of himself or of another. Phillip, thereupon, took occasion to announce to him Jesus Christ, and the necessity of Baptism. The officer reflected on what he had heard, and the chariot having reached a spot where there was water, he demanded of Phillip, whether he might not even then be baptized. Phillip answered that he certainly might, provided that he believed with all his heart, whereupon the officer professed his faith in these words: "*I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of*

God." They then descended from the chariot, and Phillip baptized him. The ceremony once over, Phillip quickly disappeared, and the officer continued his journey, admiring what had happened, and giving praise to God for the great favour he had just received. It is said, and with strong probability, that this officer preached Jesus Christ in his own nation, of which he thus became the Apostle.

Acts of the Apostles, chap. viii.

CHAPTER IV.

WAS CONCEIVED OF THE HOLY GHOST, AND BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY.

ARTICLE I.

MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION.

THE only Son of God, the Word, who existed from all eternity in the bosom of his Father, humbled himself so far as to take a body and soul like unto ours. It is not the Father who was made man, nor neither is it the Holy Ghost, but it is the Son, the second person of the Most Holy Trinity.

The manner in which this mystery was accomplished can neither be conceived by the mind of man, nor expressed in words; but this is what the Gospel teaches us concerning it. When the time appointed by divine wisdom had arrived, an angel appeared before the Blessed Virgin; he saluted her as full of grace; announced to her that she should become a mother without ceasing to be a virgin, and that He who was to be born of her should be the Son of the Most High, through the operation of the Holy Ghost. The Blessed Virgin believed the words of the celestial ambassador, and at once gave her consent. At that moment, the mystery of the Incarnation was accomplished; the Holy Ghost formed within her the body of Jesus Christ: thereto he united a soul, and at the same time was effected that indissoluble union of the divine with the human nature in

the person of the Son of God. Thus the only Son of God became man, without ceasing to be God, and thereby operated the Mystery of the Incarnation: whence it follows that the Blessed Virgin is really the Mother of God, having conceived and brought forth a Man-God. Mary, although she became a mother, still remained a virgin, Jesus Christ, her son, having been conceived by the operation of the Holy Ghost. Thus, Jesus Christ, as man, has no father, and God arranged it so, that St. Joseph should be the husband of Mary in order to hide this mystery under the veil of a chaste marriage; but as God, Jesus Christ has a Father, who begot him from all eternity, and whose equal he is. There is in Jesus Christ only one person, but there are in him two distinct natures: the divine nature, by which he is God like unto his Father, and the human nature, by which he is man like unto ourselves, possessing all the qualities proper to our nature.

Notwithstanding that this mystery is infinitely beyond the reach of the human mind, yet we ought to believe it firmly, because God, who is the sovereign truth, has revealed it to us; moreover it is nowise contrary to reason, and we have in ourselves an image of it which, although imperfect, may assist our faith. In effect, our soul, which is spiritual and incorruptible in its nature, is united to a material and corruptible body, the union of these two substances, different as they are, forming but one single man, who is thus at the same time spirit and body, incorruptible and corruptible, intelligent and material. In like manner it is that the divinity of the Word, and the nature of man, united without being confounded, form but one single Jesus Christ, true God and true man, begotten of the Father in eternity, and in time born of a virgin; as God, omnipotent, and as man surrounded with infirmity; for, with the exception of sin and its inseparable consequences, ignorance and concupiscence, Our Lord became subject to all our miseries. He was hungry and thirsty; he was subject to sleep and all the other infirmities of our nature; with this difference only, that he submitted to them by his own free will and choice, whilst we endure them against our will. But we must not imagine that the divine nature was at all changed by the Incarna-

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tion: God, without ceasing to be all that He is of himself, vouchsafed to unite himself with human nature, but he lost nothing by that union; his humiliations and his sufferings fall only on humanity; it was as man that Jesus Christ suffered, and it was as God that he gave an infinite value to his sufferings; it was as man that he became a little child, so as to leave a model for every age; and it was as the God-man that he was the Saviour of the world.

EXAMPLE.—A certain heretic, of the sect of Eutychès, being present in a company where there was a child who had been carefully instructed, he would fain persuade the child that there was but *one* nature in Jesus Christ. In order to convince him, he took two pieces of iron, which he reddened in the fire, and then joined them together so as to make but one piece. "It is thus" said he "that the divine and human natures, united together in Jesus Christ, make in his person but one single nature." "But," replied the boy, "suppose you put a little ingot of gold in the place of one of those pieces of iron,—redde the two, and put them together, so as to make but one piece. I ask you, then, will the piece be all gold, or all iron? will not each piece remain what it was before,—will not one be still an ingot of gold and the other a bit of iron, though they may be fastened together? Yes they will, and you cannot deny it. Here you would then have two pieces, the one of gold, and the other of iron, which, although entirely distinct in their nature, will yet make but one piece. Thus it is," concluded the child "that the divine and human natures, though distinct from each other, make nevertheless but one single person in Jesus Christ." *Letters Edifiant, Mission du Levant.*

ARTICLE II.

THE MYSTERY OF THE INCARNATION CONTINUED.

THE Son of God became man to redeem us from the bondage of sin and from the torments of hell, and to merit for us eternal life, to which we had lost all claim, as well by our own prevarications as by original sin. We had of

fended a God of infinite majesty, and his justice could only be satisfied by a reparation commensurate to the offence. Man could not of himself offer to God a sufficient satisfaction, nor could he then merit forgiveness. It was only the Son of God made man, true God and true man, who was capable of offering that satisfaction by suffering as man and as God imparting to his sufferings an infinite value. By this wonderful mystery of divine wisdom sin is punished but the sinner is saved: so in Jesus Christ, justice and mercy are reconciled; the injury done to God is abundantly repaired, and God is honoured as he ought to be.

Jesus Christ has become our Mediator; a perfect Mediator he is, too, allied to God by his divinity, and to us by his humanity; capable of suffering like us, because he has a nature like unto ours, and on the other hand able to reconcile us with God by his sufferings, he being himself God; a mediator who, by his perfect holiness, is infinitely pleasing to Him whom He would propitiate in our favour. This truth may be better understood by comparison; suppose, then, that a king has been insulted, nay, outraged by one of the meanest of his subjects, neither the criminal, nor any other subject of the king can offer to the majesty of the sovereign any satisfaction proportionate to the offence; all that the criminal could do would be still immeasurably beneath the magnitude of his crime. But if the son of the king, the presumptive heir of his crown, and the sharer of his throne, being touched with compassion for that man's hopeless condition, should descend from his throne, lay aside his regal adornments, and covering his head with ashes and his body with sack-cloth, prostrate himself before his father, and offer to submit himself to the punishment due to the malefactor in order to obtain pardon for him, it may well be conceived that such profound humiliation being a satisfaction or reparation fully proportionate to the greatness of the offended person, amply covers the offence, and that the king, without departing from the way of strict justice, may extend his forgiveness to the offender. Well! this is precisely what God has done for us through the Incarnation of his Son. How admirable he is in all his works, and above all in this greatest testimony of his love!—what

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an incomprehensible favour it was to give his only Son for our redemption! And what gratitude do we not owe to that generous Saviour who divested himself of his glory to assume our fallen nature, to subject himself to all our infirmities,—to appear, and to be in reality like unto us?

Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople, far from allaying the grievous scandal which had been raised by a priest named Athanasius, who declared against calling Mary, the Mother of God, publicly approved of this heretical proposition, and maintained that there are in Jesus Christ two persons, as well as two natures, so that the Blessed Virgin, ought not to be styled the *Mother of God*, but only mother of Jesus Christ. These errors were combatted and refuted by St. Cyril of Alexandria. Pope Celestine condemned them in a council held at Rome in 430, and in the following year Nestorius and his heretical doctrine were formally condemned in the general council of Ephesus. This famous heresiarch, whose impiety filled the minds of the people with horror and affright, was degraded and deposed from his patriarchate. The Fathers of the Council made known to him the sentence of his excommunication, which was couched in these words: "The Holy Council, assembled by the grace of God in the city of Ephesus, to Nestorius, the modern Judas. Know that because of the blasphemous doctrine which thou hast preached, and for thine obstinacy in maintaining the same, thou hast been deposed from every grade of ecclesiastical dignity, by the Holy Council, according to the laws and rules of the Church." Nestorius was banished to Africa by the Emperor Theodosius the younger. On the tongue of that arch-heretic there broke out a frightful ulcer wherein worms soon gathered, and eat away the wicked member to its very root. Having wandered for a long time from place to place, the wretched man died in the greatest misery, and impenitent, moreover, as might be expected.

Mérault.

ARTICLE III.

BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST.

AUGUSTUS CÆSAR having commanded a census to b

taken of all the population of the empire, Joseph and Mary went from Nazareth to Bethlehem, whence their family had its origin. There it was that, in the year of the world 4004, the Son of God came into the world, at the dead hour of night and in a poor stable, the poverty of Joseph being too great to pay for admission to an inn. His birth was speedily announced by the angels to some shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. "*Glory to God*" sang the heavenly messengers, making known the joyful tidings, "*Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace to men of good will!*"

Eight days after his birth he was circumcised, and on that same day the blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, conformably to the command which they had received from God by an angel, gave to him the name of *Jesus*, which signifies Saviour, because he came to save all men, and to deliver them from sin and hell.

To the name of *Jesus* has been added that of *Christ*, which means *sacred* or *anointed*, not that he was visibly consecrated by hands, but by reason of his hypostatical union with the Father.

We also call Jesus Christ *Our Lord*, because that he has a particular claim on all christians, whom he has redeemed and purchased at the price of his blood.

A few days after Jesus was circumcised, he was recognised as God and as king by three Magi, who guided by a star, came from the East to adore him. Having reached Jerusalem, they lost sight of the star, and went about inquiring for the new-born king of the Jews. The doctors of the law, being interrogated by Herod, king of Galilee, made answer that the Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem. Herod, being alarmed by this announcement, and already meditating the death of the divine infant, engaged the Magi to return and acquaint him with the place where the child was to be found, falsely saying that he, too, would wish to adore him. The Magi, resuming their journey, found the child, to whom they presented gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; but being warned by an angel that Herod only sought to kill the infant, they returned by another way to their own country.

Forty days after the birth of Jesus, the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph took him to the temple, to present him to God, according to the custom of the Jews, he being the first-born. The Blessed Virgin at the same time fulfilled the law of purification, and offered what the law ordained—that is to say, a lamb for her son, and for herself, a pair of doves, being the gifts usually made by the poor—what examples of humility and of obedience to the law!

Herod, seeing that the Magi returned no more, conceived the design of putting to death all children under two years of age, whom he could find in Bethlehem or its vicinity, hoping thus to make sure of destroying the Saviour. But St. Joseph, apprized of this design by an angel, fled into Egypt with Jesus and Mary, where he remained till after the death of that barbarous prince.

He then returned to Judea, and again took up his abode in Nazareth of Galilee; hence Jesus was called through contempt, *the Nazarean*.

The Gospel tells us that at the age of twelve years Jesus was taken to Jerusalem to celebrate the festival of the Pasch, according to the custom of the Jews, when he remained behind in the temple, unperceived by his parents. When they found that he was not with them, they sought him in vain for a whole day, whereupon they returned to Jerusalem where they found him in the temple, seated amidst the doctors, listening to them and proposing to them questions in a manner so astonishing that all who heard him were surprised by his wisdom and his answers.

At the age of thirty years, Jesus Christ was baptized by St. John the Baptist in the river Jordan; at which time the Holy Ghost descended upon him in the form of a dove, and the eternal Father declared from the highest heavens that Jesus Christ was indeed his beloved Son.

Soon after this, Jesus Christ was conducted by the Holy Ghost into the desert, where he fasted for forty days. It is in honour and in commemoration of this fast of Jesus Christ that the Church has instituted the fast of Lent.

Our Lord at that time permitted himself to be tempted by the devil, in order to teach us not to fear temptation, and

also the manner in which we must resist it, so as to render it even meritorious for our souls.

EXAMPLE.—A certain mother whose piety was as great as her faith was enlightened, recommended to her children to pass no day without asking the child Jesus for his blessing. "When" said she, "you are at your morning and evening prayers, picture to yourselves the Blessed Virgin, carrying in her arms the Infant Jesus. Bow down respectfully before her, and say with all possible fervour; "O Mary! deign to extend over me the hand of thy divine Son, so that being blessed by him, I may avoid the evil which is displeasing to him, and practise the good which is agreeable to him; that I may imitate him in his obedience and in all his other virtues, so that I may become worthy of possessing him with thee in heaven!"

ARTICLE IV.

THE DOCTRINE OF JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST on quitting the desert began immediately to promulgate that New Law which he came to teach mankind. Of the numerous disciples who followed him, he chose twelve, whom he called *Apostles*, that is to say, ambassadors, or messengers, because he designed to employ them in the conversion of all nations. These twelve apostles were Peter, and Andrew his brother, James and John, Phillip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alpheus, and his brother Jude, Simon the Chanaanite, and Judas Iscariot.

The Law which Jesus Christ brought into the world is truly admirable, forming a body of doctrine so perfect that it can neither be added to nor diminished in even the slightest degree. It teaches man his duty to God, to his neighbour and to himself: it is perfectly adapted to man, as considered in the body, and to each individual in particular, in every possible variety of circumstance and situation: and it is equally suited to all countries and to all times. After the closest examination of this Divine Law, we are obliged to confess that He who was its author must have had the most perfect

knowledge of man's nature, of his mind, his heart, his passions, his failings, in short of all his evils and the remedies which they require, together with his final destination, and the means which he should take in order to attain it. It is evident that if men conformed their lives to this moral code, they would be as good and as happy as it is possible to be in this world: and, in fact, let us picture to ourselves a *truly* christian people—that is to say, a society of men who love God as their common Father, who regard each other as brethren indeed, and who have amongst them but one heart and one soul; having all the same object in view, and journeying all towards the same end, which is heaven, no one ever making right subservient to passion, or sacrificing the public good to his own private interest, but, on the contrary, giving up his own happiness to promote that of others, sympathizing in their troubles and misfortunes, and alleviating them as far as in their power lies: surely such a society would be a rare spectacle for the world!—And such would be a state if composed of true Christians; peace, which is the sweetest fruit of charity, would preside over that people, and never would the cry of discord be heard, because there would be neither wrong, nor violence, nor jealousy, nor contention. There would be seen none truly unhappy, because none would be wicked. Wealth would then be wealth indeed, and evils would be no longer such, because charity would render all riches common property, and take the load of misfortune from one, to make it also common to all by Christian sympathy and compassion. What tranquillity would there abound, and what resignation under loss or affliction!—Old age, infirmity and sickness would be balanced by the assurance of a happier futurity, and even death would only be regarded as the transit from temporal happiness, to that which is eternal.

Yes, such would be the fruits of the Laws of Jesus Christ, if reduced to practice. “The universe would be but a society of friends, and the entire world would become a terrestrial paradise.”

The mysteries of religion are, doubtless, beyond the reach of our understanding; but the motives on which we are made to believe them are more than sufficient to satisfy any rational mind.

What sublimity, what sanctity there is in that precept: "Fear not" says the Redeemer, "those who can kill only the body; but rather fear Him who can cast both body and soul into hell!"

"Love God with all thy heart, and remember that thou canst not serve two masters. Be not ashamed of me before men, and I will recognise thee before my Father in heaven. Beware of doing thine actions to be seen by men. If thine eye, thy hand, or thy foot be a cause of scandal to thee, pluck them out—cut them off—and cast them far from thee. Looks, desires, or even idle words are prohibited. Be not solicitous as to your food or clothing; "consider the birds of the air, thy heavenly Father feeds them," says he again, "and behold how he clothes the lily of the fields.—Do good to all—love even thine enemies!—forgive, that thou mayest be forgiven—judge not, and thou shalt not be judged.—A cup of cold water given in my name shall not be without its reward.—If thou hast trouble, rejoice therein; if thou sufferest for righteousness' sake, rejoice and be glad, for a great reward is reserved for thee in heaven."

Even Jean Jacques Rousseau, charmed with the sublimity of this beautiful doctrine, cried out in admiration: "The sanctity of the Gospel speaks to my heart.—Behold the writings of the philosophers how insignificant they are when compared with that!—Can it be that a book at once so simple and so sublime is the work of men? Is it possible that he whose history it relates was himself but a mere man?—Is that the tone—the language of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious sectary?—What sweetness, what purity in his manners and morals!—what touching beauty and grace in his instructions!—what elevation in his maxims!—what profound wisdom in his discourse! what presence of mind—what ingenuity and good sense in his answers!—what controul, too, over his passions! where is the man, or the sage who knows how to act, to suffer and to die without either weakness or ostentation?—When Plato describes his imaginary character of a just man, covered with all the opprobrium of crime, yet worthy of all the reward due to virtue, he describes Jesus Christ feature for feature, and the resemblance is so striking that all the Fathers have felt its force, for in

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fact it cannot be mistaken. How blindly prejudiced must he have been who dared to compare the son of Sophroniska to the son of Mary! what an immeasurable distance is there between them!—Socrates dying without pain, without ignominy, found it easy to keep up his character to the last; and had not his death done honour to his life, we might doubt whether Socrates, with all his intellect, was any thing more than a sophist. It is true he invented his moral code, but then others before him had put it in practice; so that he did but say what *they* had done, and reduce *their* examples into precepts. Aristides had been just long before Socrates decided what justice was. Leonidas had died for his country before Socrates had made it a duty to love one's country. Sparta was sober, ere yet Socrates had extolled sobriety; and Greece had abounded in virtuous men before he had defined virtue. But where had Jesus Christ learned that pure and elevated morality which he first and alone promulgated both by precept and example?—The death of Socrates, calmly talking philosophy with his friends, is the sweetest death imaginable; that of Jesus Christ, expiring amid torments, jeers, and revilings, and cursed by an entire people, is the most horrible that can be conceived; Socrates, when he took the poisoned cup blessed him who presented it because he wept for him; Jesus, while suffering the most cruel torture, prays for his ruthless and infuriate tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are the life and the death of a God. Shall we venture to say that the history contained in the Gospel is merely a fictitious narrative?—Ah! not such is human invention, and the history of Socrates, which no one thinks of doubting, is not so well attested as that of Christ—It is much easier to conceive that one individual should have formed the subject of this book, than that several men should have agreed in its fabrication. Never would Jewish writers have adopted such a tone or invented such a code of morality, and the Gospel has the impress of truth, so grand, so striking, so every way inimitable that the inventor or author if it would be still more marvellous than its hero."

Emile (J. J. Rousseau)

EXAMPLE.—Diderot was surprised by the visit of one of his friends, while he was hearing his daughter recite a portion of the Gospel. The friend could not help expressing his astonishment. "Well, after all," replied the philosopher, "what better can I teach her?"—The celebrated Byron, too, opposed as he was to true piety, still desired to have his daughter brought up in the principles of Christian faith. And how many others like them, would have admired the sublimity of the Gospel, and believed in its mysteries with profound adoration, had not the Gospel commanded us to shun evil and to practise every virtue!

ARTICLE V.

THE LIFE AND MIRACLES OF JESUS CHRIST.

JESUS CHRIST has proved his divine mission not alone by the exact fulfilment of the prophecies which had for four thousand years foretold his coming, but also by a great number of miracles wrought by his own hand and in his own name. If prophecy be a proof of divine intervention, the power of working miracles is no less convincing.

If we saw a man wield controul over the laws of nature,—for instance, walking on the surface of the water,—restoring sight to the blind, or bringing back the dead to life, we should have no doubt that this man was an ambassador from God. We feel that such deeds as these are far beyond the power of man, and that it is God alone who can suspend the ordinary course of the laws of nature. So it was that our Lord proved his mission; he wrought a great number of miracles, as the Gospel relates; he brought the dead to life, he commanded the winds and the waves into stillness; on two occasions he multiplied bread in the desert so as to supply food for the great multitude which had followed him there; he changed water into wine; he restored sight to the blind; hearing to the deaf, motion to the paralytic; he cured in an instant the most inveterate diseases, often with a single word, and sometimes without either seeing or even approaching the sick.

Be it remarked that all the miracles of Our Lord were

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useful to man; they were as much manifestations of his goodness as of his power, and they were never done through ostentation. In vain did the Pharisees demand of him a sign from heaven: in vain did Herod express his desire to see a prodigy operated: in no one instance did he do anything extraordinary to gratify curiosity, but at the same time he never refused to cure the sick or diseased who implored his aid. Be it also remembered that the reality of his miracles is incontestible; they were not performed in hidden or obscure places, but in the midst of the streets and public squares, in the temple, and before an entire people. The resuscitation of Lazarus was operated at Bethania, within a short distance of Jerusalem, in the presence of a whole multitude of witnesses; the cure of the man who had been palsied for thirty-eight years, and also that of the blind man took place in the city of Jerusalem. This last miracle was much talked of; the chiefs of the synagogue becoming alarmed, interrogated the man who had been blind, and also his parents; but their investigation served only to confirm the truth of the miracle and to bring it still more before the public. When Our Lord performed his miracles in the desert, several thousands of people were present. In fact the greater number of his miracles were wrought under the very eyes of the Pharisees and Doctors of the Law, who were his declared enemies, and therefore the most likely to be incredulous as to his power; but, confounded by the evidence of those very miracles, they dared not deny them, and were even forced to vouch for their authenticity. "What are we about?" said they amongst themselves, "this man worketh many miracles; if we let him go on all the people will believe in him."

We must then conclude, and boldly declare that the miracles of Jesus Christ were sufficiently numerous and sufficiently splendid to prove that he was the Messiah; nor had any one of the ancient prophets been at all like unto him. Hence the people, filled with admiration, loudly proclaimed him to be the Messiah. "Behold!" said they, "this is truly the prophet who was to come into the world. A great prophet hath arisen amongst us, and God hath visited his people."

Not only did our Lord himself perform many miracles, but he also gave to his disciples a similar power. He said to them: "Heal the sick, raise the dead to life,—cleanse lepers,—drive out devils." And all these prodigies have the Apostles performed in the course of their mission. By that they proved that they spoke in the name and on the part of the author of nature, and the effect of these marvels is plainly visible. It was by these means that they converted the entire world. The universe, in its evangelized state is a manifest and enduring proof of the miraculous deeds of the Apostles. Hence Religion could not have been established on a firmer basis; its proofs, consisting as they do, of both prophecies and miracles, are within the reach of the simplest mind, while they are at the same time calculated to convince even the most enlightened understanding. God raised up a host of inspired men, who, many ages before, predicted with the most perfect accuracy events the most unlikely to come to pass. To this is added miracles the most incontestible, performed in the face of all Judea, multiplied in an infinity of ways, and repeated in every quarter of the globe. What more can be required, in order to produce full conviction, and immovable belief?

EXAMPLE.—A certain young man being present where some one was exclaiming against miracles, considered it his duty to speak out in defence of his faith. He, at first, quoted Celsus, Julian, and Porphyry, as being unimpeachable witnesses, all of whom confess that Jesus Christ astonished the world by his miracles. He then cited the opinion of J. J. Rousseau, and that of Voltaire. But how great was his surprise on finding that his auditors were more incredulous than Rousseau, their master, and more obstinate than any apostate in the disbelief of miracles.

Resuming his discourse, he went on thus: "It appears, then, that you are absolutely decided not to yield to the authority of your masters, and that, in your opinion, Julian and the others, were too credulous. I ask of you now but one thing, which I am sure you will grant: you all allow that it is at least hard to believe our dogmas and still harder to put in practice our moral precepts?" "*Hard!* say rather

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impossible!" was the answer from every tongue. The young man resumed: "Well! then, if our mysteries are so incredible, if they *cannot* be believed, how is it that they have been received throughout all the earth? How is it that the Gospel has had its disciples and believers in every rank of society, even in the palaces of kings, at a time when Baptism was a warrant for martyrdom?" These questions covered his adversaries with confusion, and they troubled him no more with their objections.

MERAULT.

ARTICLE VI.

ON THE VIRTUES OF OUR LORD.

JESUS CHRIST has himself practised in the highest degree of perfection, the Law which he gave unto us, and his entire life was but a faithful exposition of his doctrine. The more we meditate on his actions, the more strongly are we impressed with the eminent holiness of his life. It was his pleasure to pass through the state of childhood, so as to leave a model for the virtues suitable to that period. His obedience to St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin contains all the virtues of a child: when he is submissive and docile, he hears and follows the advice of those who have authority over him, and by such docility and submission what progress does he not make in learning and in virtue!—Jesus Christ was pleased to content himself with the practice of these obscure and tranquil virtues till he had attained the age of thirty years, when he commenced his public ministry, at which period the more sublime virtues began to shine forth in his conduct. His mildness was truly admirable, so that it was written of him "he has not broken the bruised reed, nor extinguished the smoking flax." Never was he known to repulse a suppliant: even the greatest sinners he received with kindness; nay, he scrupled not to eat with them, and when reproached with his condescension, he replied that he came "*not to call the just but sinners to repentance.*" "*It is not*" said he "*they who are in health who stand in need of a physician, but rather those who are sick.*" He set himself forth, moreover, under the description of a tender father who hastens to meet an

ungrateful son on his return from his wanderings, throw himself on his neck, waters his face with tears of gladness, and yields himself up to all the intoxication of joy, for that his son had come back to him again. He caressed little children, and placing his hand on their heads, he blessed them, saying to his disciples, "*Let them come unto me—hinder them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*"—In every part of his conduct we behold the most winning gentleness, and a mildness calculated to inspire the fullest confidence, but on the other hand he never failed to rebuke the hardened sinner, and above all, the Pharisees, whom he openly reproached for their hypocrisy and pride.

Jesus Christ manifested on every occasion, the most invincible patience; if we follow him from the stable wherein he was born, to the rock of Calvary, whereon he died, we shall every where behold him in pain, and in sorrow, toiling and suffering. He endured hunger, thirst, the fatigue of travelling, and all the inconveniences of extreme poverty; he was pleased to possess nothing while here on earth; he had not even a stone whereon to lay his head; he lived on the voluntary contributions of those to whom he announced the word of God; he bore without a murmur the annoyance of the crowd pressing around him; and the importunities of the sick wherewith he was continually overwhelmed. He was loaded with insult and with abuse, yet never once did he revenge himself on any one.

It has above all in the different circumstances of his passion that he displayed a patience and fortitude truly divine; notwithstanding the extreme torments inflicted upon him, he uttered not a single word of complaint, reproach, or menace, and when fastened to the cross, he prayed for his tormentors.

The entire life of Jesus Christ was one continued exercise of the most profound humility; thus he said "Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart."—He chose to be born of a lowly mother; he passed thirty years in obscurity, and when he did come forth before the people, he ever shunned the grandeur and pomp of the world. Never did he publish his own greatness, and he even forbade the people to speak of his miracles. In him, detachment from worldly wealth, went so far as the absolute love of poverty; he not only

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despised honours but sought humiliations, and the knowledge which he had of the vanity of pleasure, made him prefer crosses and sufferings. It was, therefore, with reason that he reproached the Jews for rejecting the truths inculcated by him, since his perfect holiness plainly manifested that he was sent by God.

EXAMPLE.—A certain holy man was accustomed to say to those who consulted him on the affair of their salvation; "Keep our Saviour before you in all your actions, and they shall acquire a sublime degree of perfection, while at the same time every difficulty shall be smoothed away. When you awake consider with what fervour his sacred humanity fulfilled his duties to the Divine Majesty; behold the dispositions with which he applied himself to the labour of the profession which he had embraced to teach us to sanctify ours; how he conversed with his neighbour; in what manner he took his repasts; and the many privations which he endured for our sake. If you are poor, remember that he had not even a stone whereon to lay his head; if you are suffering, behold his wounds; if your enemies persecute you, think of the hatred of the Pharisees; if you are deserted by your friends, remember that he was sold by Judas, denied by Peter, and abandoned by all his disciples; in a word, never lose sight of that divine model in what situation soever you may be placed, and your life shall be truly angelic!"

CHAPTER V.

OF THE MYSTERY OF THE REDEMPTION.

ARTICLE I.

**JESUS CHRIST SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE; WAS
CRUCIFIED.**

THE divine sanctity which shone forth in Jesus Christ, the purity of his doctrine, and the splendour of his miracles, so far from propitiating and winning over the Pharisees and the

chiefs of the Jews, did but enkindle their envious hatred, and inspire them with the cruel design of putting him to death.

The time being at hand when Jesus Christ was to give himself up to the fury of the Jews, in order to secure our salvation, that divine Saviour sent two of his disciples to prepare the Pasch, and in the evening he repaired to the spot with his other disciples. Having eaten the Paschal Lamb, as prescribed by the Law, he arose from the table, and girding himself with a towel, began to wash the feet of his disciples. Then returning to the table, he took bread, which he blessed, and having returned thanks, he changed it into his own body: he afterwards took the cup, containing the wine, and changed it also into his own blood. He thus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist, and commanded his disciples to renew what he had just done, and so to perpetuate the memory of his passion and death, even to the consummation of the world. After this memorable action, Jesus Christ made a long address to his Apostles, testifying to them the fervour of his love for man, announcing to them their approaching flight, and promising to appear to them again after his resurrection.

He then quitted the supper-room, and repaired to the garden of Olives, where, being arrived, he withdrew a little from his disciples to pray. Reflecting as he prayed, on the enormity of sin, the greatness of the sufferings which he was to undergo, and the little profit which perverse men would derive from them, he was seized with a mortal anguish and a grievous sadness, so that his body was bathed with a bloody sweat. Approaching his disciples, he found them asleep, whereupon returning to the place of his prayer, he prostrated himself on the ground, and said: "My Father! if it be possible, let this chalice pass away from me,—nevertheless not my will but thine be done!" An angel was then sent to console and strengthen him.

Scarcely had Jesus finished his prayer, when Judas, who had withdrawn from amongst the other Apostles after supper, presented himself in the garden at the head of a mob armed with swords and clubs, to apprehend him. The wily traitor went directly up to Jesus, and kissed him, being the signal on which he had agreed with the people whom he

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brought. So great was the forbearance of Our Lord that, even then he addressed him by the name of *friend*, and contented himself with reminding him of the enormity of the crime which he committed in betraying him thus. He then inquired of the people who had come with Judas, who it was that they sought; they replied "Jesus of Nazareth." and he quickly answered, "I am he." At these words they all fell to the ground, without any intention of doing so, and this fall, as extraordinary, as it was unlooked for, might have caused them to reflect on what they were doing, and to become sensible of the power of Jesus Christ, but their hearts were so hardened, that no sooner had they regained their feet, than they hastened to seize him, and binding him with cords, they brought him into the city, whereupon all his disciples fled from him in dismay, and left him alone with his merciless enemies.

The Jews first conveyed Jesus to the house of Annas, father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was then high-priest. They afterwards took him to the house of Caiaphas, who examined him concerning his disciples and his doctrine, to whom Jesus replied: "I have not spoken in secret: interrogate those who heard me, and they will bear testimony to what I have said." Just then one of the soldiers struck him, but he manifested no anger—his patience was proof against all.

The chief priests well knowing that they could not accuse Jesus of any real crime, set about seeking false witnesses, so as to have a pretext for condemning him to death; nevertheless, their design did not succeed, because their witnesses could not agree in their testimony, wherefore, the high-priest charged him in the most solemn manner to say whether he really was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus answered that he was, and that he should be one day seen by men seated at the right hand of God, his Father. On hearing this, the pontiff arose from his seat, and, rending his garments, cried out that Jesus had blasphemed; that there were no witnesses now required, and that he deserved death. This sentence was instantly confirmed by the chief priests and scribes who were present. Then the people who stood near to Jesus began to spit upon his face, and having blindfolded him, they slapped and buffeted him, saying: "Pro-

phesy unto us, Oh Christ! who it is that strikes thee!" In this manner did they revile and abuse him, blaspheming his holy name.

Whilst Jesus was undergoing all this outrage, a much more sensible pain was inflicted on him by Peter. That disciple, having followed him at a distance, had entered the house of the high priest, whereupon a maid servant taxed him with being a follower of Jesus, and Peter denied that he was. Others having insisted upon his being a Galilean, he again denied; and a servant of the pontiff having affirmed that he had seen him with Jesus in the garden, Peter, seized with fear, confirmed his denial with an oath. At that moment, Jesus turned and looked at him, which recalled to the mind of Peter that Jesus had told him all this beforehand, and going forth from the place, he wept bitterly. Meanwhile Jesus, in the hands of his enemies, had to suffer all that night every species of outrage and every torment that malice could devise.

In the morning the chief priests and the elders held a council in order to concert the means of having him put to death; they sent him to Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, accusing him of seeking to instigate their nation to rebel, of forbidding the people to pay tribute to Cæsar, and calling himself the Messiah and the king. Pilate having questioned Jesus, and found him perfectly innocent of all crime, told the Jews to take him and judge him by their own laws. The chief priests replied that they had no power to put any man to death, and renewed their clamorous entreaties, saying that Jesus had excited the people by his doctrine from Galilee even to Jerusalem.

On hearing that Jesus was a Galilean, and therefore a subject of Herod, the king of that country, Pilate was very glad to get rid of the affair by sending him to that prince who was then in Jerusalem. Herod having interrogated Jesus on the principal charges brought against him by the scribes and chief priests, and failing to draw from him any sort of answer, treated him with contempt as being a fool, and having clothed him in a white robe by way of mockery, he sent him back again to Pilate.

Pilate, who had more probity than the chiefs of the Jews,

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would have wished to set Jesus free, seeing that it was envy alone which instigated the chief priests to deliver him up; nevertheless, having no mind to displease the Jews by liberating a man accused of advising the people not to pay tribute to Cæsar, he endeavoured to pacify them. Bringing forward those who accused Jesus, he told them that neither Herod nor himself had found him guilty of any of the crimes laid to his charge, but that, in order to please them, he would have him punished, before he sent him away. But the Jews would not hear of any merely trifling punishment, so that Pilate was obliged to seek some other means of restoring Jesus to liberty. It just then occurred to him that it was customary for the Roman governor, on the great festival of the Pasch, to liberate one prisoner giving the choice to the people. There being then in prison a noted robber named Barabbas, Pilate demanded whether the people would have him liberate Jesus or Barabbas, supposing that they would never think of preferring a public malefactor before the meek Jesus, in whom no guile could be found. Nevertheless the chief priests persuaded the multitude to pronounce in favour of Barabbas, which they did, crying out all together, "*Let Jesus be crucified, and deliver Barabbas unto us!*"

Pilate, seeing that every expedient had failed him, and that he could no longer hope to liberate Jesus as he wished to do, took the resolution of having him severely scourged, in order to excite the compassion of the people by showing him to them covered with blood.

He gave him up, therefore, to the fury of the soldiers, who, having mangled him all over with their heavy blows, clad him in a purple robe, and placed on his head a crown of thorns, then putting a reed in his hand, they bent the knee before him, exclaiming in their cruel mockery: "*Hail! King of the Jews!*" And spitting on his sacred face, they took the reed from his hand and gave him several strokes on the head.

Pilate, seeing Jesus in this pitiable condition, led him out of the pretorium, and sitting down on his judgment seat, he said to the Jews, "*Behold the man!*" adding, that though he had thus punished him, he found him guilty of no crime.

Nevertheless, the chief priests and their officers no sooner saw him than they cried out, "*Crucify him!—crucify him!*" Pilate said to them again, "*Behold your king!*" But they answered that they had no other king but Cæsar, and that their law required that Jesus should be put to death, for having styled himself the *Son of God*. Being still more alarmed by these last words, Pilate still sought a pretext to save Jesus, whereupon the Jews lost all patience and cried out that if he set Jesus free, he would declare himself the enemy of Cæsar. This threat produced its effect, and Pilate having caused water to be brought, washed his hands before all the people, saying that he was innocent of the blood of that just man. In order to encourage him, the Jews vociferated; "*Let his blood be on us and on our children!*" Then the weak-minded governor abandoned Jesus to the fury of his implacable enemies, who, having stripped him of his purple garment, put on his own clothes, laid the cross on his shoulders, and led him away to crucify him. Exhausted with suffering and fatigue, Our Saviour fell several times under the weight of that enormous load, so that the soldiers laid hold of a man named Simon, who was coming in from the fields, and compelled him to assist in carrying the cross. We can scarcely understand why they did so, but it is probable they were afraid that Jesus might die on the way, and thus deprive them of the pleasure of crucifying him, for we cannot suppose that they were actuated by any sentiment of compassion.

It was at a place named Calvary, in the vicinity of Jerusalem that Jesus was crucified. On the top of the cross was placed the inscription: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews*.

Those who passed by, blasphemed him, wagging their heads in derision, and saying, "Thou who couldst destroy the Temple of God, and in three days rebuild it, save now thyself:—if thou art indeed the Son of God, come down now from the cross." The Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the Pharisees also mocked him, saying, "He hath saved others, and, lo! he cannot save himself." Two robbers who were crucified with Jesus, one on either side, applied to him the same derisive reproaches; nevertheless, one of the two was

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converted, and implored Jesus *to be mindful of him when he came to his kingdom*; whereupon Jesus speedily assured him; "*This day thou shalt be with me in paradise.*" He then prayed his heavenly Father to forgive his executioners, and to his blessed mother, who stood at the foot of the cross, he said, pointing to St. John: "*Woman behold thy Son!*"—and to St. John, "*Behold thy mother!*" He then said "*I thirst,*" and they gave him vinegar to drink. Even thus had the Prophets foretold that he was to be treated for the love of us, and that he would heal our wounds by his own bruises.

EXAMPLE.—A young lady who had resolved to embrace a religious life, went to inform the superior of a convent of her intention. The latter wishing to try the vocation of the young postulant, led her to the chapel, and made known to her the portion of time which was to be spent in prayer, not only during the day, but a part of the night; she then took her to the dormitory, and pointed out to her its total want of comfort, and the hardness of the bed on which she was to take the brief rest which the rules only allowed. She showed her every where that nature had to suffer; in the refectory, where the diet was of the poorest kind; in the chapter, where the slightest fault must be rigorously punished, &c. &c.: and then she asked her whether she still persevered in her intention. What was her astonishment when the young girl answered, with as much candour as firmness: "Mother I see plainly that nature has much to suffer here; one thing, however, consoles me, and that is, that every where you brought me I beheld a crucifix!—Can he find any of these things hard to bear, having such a spectacle before our eyes."

ARTICLE II.

DEAD AND BURIED.

DURING three hours, Jesus Christ suffered the most excruciating torments on the cross, when he at length cried out with a loud voice; "My God! into thy hands I commend my Spirit!" and, bowing down his sacred head, as though giving permission for death to strike him, he expired

Whilst Jesus was hanging on the cross, many extraordinary things took place; the earth trembled, the rocks were rent asunder, several sepulchres opened, and the dead walked forth; the veil of the temple was rent, the sun was eclipsed, so that total darkness followed, though it was noon day. This last prodigy caused Denis the Areopagite to say, that either the God of nature was suffering, or the end of the world was at hand.

These wonders produced no effect on the minds of the Jews: a few only, following the example of the Roman centurion, struck their breasts, and said: "This man was indeed the Son of God."

Meanwhile, the Jews, not choosing to have the bodies hanging on the crosses on the Sabbath day, requested Pilate to allow them to break their legs and take them away.

The governor then sent soldiers who broke the legs of the two thieves; and seeing that Jesus was already dead, they pierced his side with a spear. Even so had the Prophet foretold, "Thou shalt not break one of his bones;" and in another place, "They shall behold him whom they pierced."

But Joseph of Arimathea, being desirous to bury the body of Jesus, asked leave of Pilate to take it down from the cross, and being joined by Nicodemus, they embalmed it with precious perfumes, and laid it in a new sepulchre, hewn out of the solid rock, the mouth of which they closed with a large stone, in presence of the holy women who had accompanied them.

By the words: *Jesus is dead*, we are to understand that his soul was separated from his body; nevertheless, it must be observed that his divinity was neither separated from soul or body, but remained inseparably united with both.

Jesus Christ submitted to death, and by *his* death he sanctified *ours*; and has merited for us the favour of having that penalty of sin converted into a voluntary sacrifice most acceptable to God. He submitted to the humiliation of the grave, so as to divest that state of the horror with which nature regards it, and to fill us with the consoling hope of the future resurrection of the body.

The sight of our divine head enclosed in the tomb, whence he was so soon to emerge full of life, assures us of the ful-

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silment of what the Apostle has promised ourselves: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it shall rise in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour, it shall rise in glory: it is sown in weakness, it shall rise in power. It is sown an animal body: it shall rise a spiritual body."

EXAMPLE.—"Whence comes it that you are never vexed, or never seem to be moved, no matter what is done or said to you?" This question was addressed to St. Elzear, Count of Arian, in Provence, by his virtuous wife. His reply was as follows; "How could I be angry with any one, or complain of any wrong that is done me, when I think of the ignominy wherewith Christ was loaded for my sake?—What torments did he not endure for my salvation? The mere thought of his sufferings, and of his surprising charity towards those who tortured and put him to death, suffices to cover me with confusion, seeing that I suffer nothing for him."

SURIUS.

CHAPTER VI.

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL; THE THIRD DAY HE
 AROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

ARTICLE I.

HE DESCENDED INTO HELL.

JESUS CHRIST being dead, his soul descended into Limbo, that is to say, the place where the souls of the patriarchs and saints who had died since the beginning of the world were kept in a state of expectation. These holy souls loved and praised God, looking forward to the coming of the divine Liberator, but they were excluded from heaven, because the gate thereof had been closed against mankind by the sin of our first parents, and was only to be opened by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In the presence of his holy soul united to his divinity, the spirits of the just,

even in their prison, began at once to enjoy that happiness which they had so long and so ardently desired; nevertheless, they did not ascend into heaven till the day of the ascension, because it was fitting that he who by his death, threw open its gates, should himself be the first to enter. It was on that day, then, that they entered heaven in his triumphant train, and took possession of the reward of their labours.

EXAMPLE.—“When you are preparing yourself for the holy communion,” said a saintly personage to his disciples, “endeavour to excite within you the dispositions of those blessed souls who had for four thousand years sighed for the coming of the Redeemer. Who could express their joy when they beheld for the first time the adorable soul and divinity of the Liberator!—With what transports of delight did they cast themselves before him to pay their homage to him, and to thank him for the satisfaction which he had offered for them, and for the favour he did them in thus revealing to them his beatified presence!—They were solely occupied with contemplating him. Renounce in like manner all other affections, and attach yourself to him alone both for time and for eternity.”

ARTICLE II.

THE THIRD DAY HE AROSE AGAIN FROM THE DEAD.

ON the morning of the Sabbath (Saturday) the Jews went to Pilate, and repeating to him what Jesus had said concerning his resurrection, they requested that a guard should be placed on the sepulchre, lest his disciples might carry off the body, and give out that he was risen again. Pilate granted the desired permission: “you have guards,” said he, “go guard the sepulchre as you know.”

The chief priests having ascertained that the body of Jesus was still there, sealed up the stone in the mouth of the sepulchre, and set guards to watch it. Thus did providence arrange it, in order to place the death and resurrection of Christ beyond a doubt, by the very precautions which his enemies

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took to prevent any imposture. If the body of Jesus had not been seen in the tomb more than twenty-four hours after being laid there, the Jews might have said that he was not dead, and had they not placed guards of their own to watch it, they might have accused the Apostles of having gained over the Roman soldiers to let them carry off the body of the Saviour.

Nevertheless, on the first day of the week, Jesus Christ having arisen from the dead, (that is to say, that he had again united his soul and body) came forth gloriously from the tomb; whereupon an angel descended from heaven, and rolling back the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, sat down upon it. The guards were so terrified that they fell to the ground, apparently dead. When they recovered, however, they went to inform the chief priests of what had passed, who promised them large sums of money on condition that they gave out that while they slept the disciples of Jesus had taken away his body; at the same time they undertook to exculpate them before the governor, in case they were brought into trouble. In the meantime, Mary Magdalen, who knew nothing of what was passing, or even that the sepulchre was guarded, had come from Jerusalem with some other pious women to embalm their master's body. Arrived in the garden, they saw the sepulchre open! whereupon Mary Magdalen ran to tell the Apostles. St. Peter and St. John hastened thither, and finding only the grave-clothes, they returned to the city, wondering at what had happened, but still not believing that Jesus was risen.

Magdalen, going back alone to the sepulchre beheld the angel sitting there, who assured her that Jesus Christ had arisen, and soon after she saw the Saviour himself, who commanded her to go tell the disciples what she had seen; whilst she was gone, Our Lord appeared to the other holy women who staid behind in the garden. On the same day he showed himself to two of the disciples who were going to Emmaus, and these two, hastening back to inform the Apostles of what had happened to them, found them assembled together, conversing on the subject of the resurrection, and of his having appeared to St. Peter. Immediately Jesus stood in their midst, spoke to them for some time, and re-

proached them with their incredulity in refusing to believe those who had told them of his resurrection. Thomas was not present on that occasion, and he would not believe the other Apostles that Jesus had been there. But eight days after, Jesus once more appeared to them all, and addressing himself to Thomas, ordered him to draw near and put his hand in the wound in his side, and his fingers in the holes made by the nails in his hands. The Apostle exclaimed in an ecstasy of conviction: "My Lord and my God!" It was thus that for forty days Jesus Christ showed himself on various occasions in the assemblies of the Apostles and disciples, spoke to them, eat with them, recalled to their minds the lessons he had given them before his death, instructed them on the establishment of his Church, wrought miracles before them, and so convinced them of the truth of his resurrection.

EXAMPLE.—Jonas is one of the most striking figures of our Saviour's resurrection. That prophet had been sent to preach penance to the Ninevites, but fearing that barbarous people that they might kill him, he embarked for Tharsis. The Lord, being angry with him for his disobedience, permitted a furious tempest to overtake him on the sea. The sailors were struck with terror, and thinking that there was something supernatural in this fearful storm, they suspected that it was the wrath of heaven pursuing some criminal; whereupon they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonas. Being thus made sensible of his fault, he consented that they should throw him overboard, and even urged the sailors to do it, in order to save the crew of the vessel. They yielded, though with reluctance, and forthwith the tempest died away; nevertheless, the Lord wishing at the same time to save the prophet's life, and to make him a figure of the Saviour's resurrection, ordered it so that he was swallowed up by a sea-monster. After three days he was vomited forth on the sand, without having sustained the slightest injury. Thereupon the prophet, instructed by his own experience, accomplished his mission and converted Nineveh. We are assured by Jesus Christ himself, that Jonas, in the whale's belly, was the figure of his own body cast into the earth,

and arising therefrom on the third day. David also had announced this mystery, saying in the name of the Messiah: "Thou wilt not that thy Holy One should undergo the corruption of the tomb."

ARTICLE III.

PROOFS OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

To prove the resurrection of Jesus Christ, is to prove at the same time his divinity and the truth of all that he has taught. Thus, if Jesus is risen again, there *is* a Church, there are sacraments, a heaven, a hell, an eternity, &c.

The testimony of the Apostles regarding this great event can only be contested in two ways, that is to say, either by asserting that they were themselves deceived, or that they deceived others. For a narrative must be taken as true, when we are assured that they who relate it have neither been seduced into error themselves, nor sought to seduce others; when they seem quite sure of what they record being true, and relate it with the utmost accuracy.

If the skeptic say that the Apostles were, indeed, sincere in their account, but were themselves imposed on, we may ask him, in what manner it was that they were deceived; if, for example, they really saw nothing when they imagined that they saw Jesus, or if they mistook some other appearance for him. To impute to them a succession of such serious blunders would be to suppose that their minds were deranged—they must have been fools, in which case, their imbecility would have been perceived, they would have been reproached for it, not a soul would have listened to them, nor could they have made any conversions. If their minds were deranged, their malady must have been precisely the same in all and their minds must have wandered in the same direction. Let any one who could fancy such a thing possible, go into a lunatic asylum and see whether he can find two persons labouring under the same kind of insanity. But as far as the Apostles are concerned, all their words and actions go to prove that they were in full possession of their intellectual faculties.

It is true there is a possibility that a man may be deceived, and either imagine that he sees what he really does not see or he may mistake one object for another; but when a great number of men are under the same illusion, so that of a whole multitude there will not be found one more clear-sighted or with a better understanding, so as to discover and show up the error of the rest, then the thing is altogether improbable. We may easily be mistaken in the identity of a person whom we have seen but once; but common sense spurns the idea that a similar mistake could be made with regard to a person whom we had perfectly known, whom we have repeatedly seen face to face, and with whom we have conversed long and frequently. A single sense may sometimes be deceived, but that all the senses should be at fault; that we should at the same time imagine that we saw, heard, and touched one who in reality we neither saw, heard, nor touched, is an absurdity which shocks all physical certainty, founded as it principally is, on the conformity of the various senses.

These premises once established, let us apply them to the narrative of the Apostles, whose sincerity, at least, is now generally conceded.

They tell us, then, that Jesus Christ whom they knew perfectly well, having been for three years his followers, appeared not only to one of them, but to several amongst them; now to one, now to another, to Magdalen, and the other devout women, to Peter, to the disciples going to Emmaus, then to all the Apostles in full assembly, and in fine to more than five hundred persons. They mention the places wherein he appeared, relate the conversations which he held with them, the reproaches which he made to them; and the mission on which he sent them. They tell us that they ate with him, that they felt the wounds in his hands, his feet, and his side. Is there, then, any possibility, that a concurrence of circumstances so varied could have been the effect of illusion? Can any rational mind suppose that so many men were deceived at the same time, and in precisely the same manner; that they all fancied they saw that which they did not see, heard what never struck their ear, and touched what never came under their hands?

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But it may be objected, that the Apostles were illiterate, and therefore open to imposition. It is quite true that they were illiterate, but it does not follow that they were either blind or deaf. Where any palpable fact is in question, an unlettered man is as good a witness as a philosopher; and do not the judges every day decide the fate and fortunes of the accused on the depositions of ignorant and illiterate witnesses. Do they ever think of asking a witness whether he has been admitted into the academy of sciences before they receive his testimony?—No, he has seen, he has heard, and that suffices.

It may again be objected that the Apostles being persuaded that their master was to rise again, were consequently predisposed, and made liable to be deceived. Yes, without doubt, Jesus had told them that he would rise again, but after his death they took so little note of that promise, that they refused at first to believe those who had seen him. They even went so far as to say that they would not believe, without the evidence of their own senses, and would see, hear, and touch before they could be brought to believe. It must then be acknowledged that the Apostles could not have been deceived, and that having seen and heard more than enough to convince them, they did really believe that Jesus Christ arose from the dead.

But even supposing that they did not believe it, let us examine whether they could have imposed on the entire world by announcing facts in which they themselves had no faith. Those men would undoubtedly be exceedingly base, who being determined to deceive both the world at large and their own conscience, and joining hypocrisy to falsehood, would have us adore as a God him whom they knew to be an impostor. Not only would such men be guilty in the extreme, but such conduct must have some interested motive. What do we see in the Apostles to authorize so foul a suspicion of them? They brought to the world the purest and holiest morality; there was not a vice which they did not combat, nor a virtue which they did not inculcate. Had they been actuated by the love of gain, would they not have flattered the human heart, instead of attacking as they did the customs, the passions, the prejudices of mankind?

Would they not have made some allowance for the times, the passions, and the inclinations of the heart; and would they have referred to a future life the reward of the sacrifices which they required of men? Would not their conduct have belied their fair precepts, and of all the numerous preachers of the new doctrines, would not some one have let out the secret of the great plot formed by them to deceive the world?

The first care of an impostor is to destroy all traces of his fraud, and he places his invented facts at a distant period, and in a distant region, so as to guard against the investigation of his contemporaries. The contrary is the case with the Apostles, who, immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, commenced preaching even in Jerusalem itself, and feared not to say: "Yourselves have been witnesses of what we tell you, you have seen, and you have heard." And is there any objection made to this assertion of theirs? None. Did any man undertake to prove that Jesus had not arisen? Not so, but they imposed silence on the Apostles. Oh! how forceful is the silence of so many adversaries interested not only in disputing these facts, but in publishing their victory to the world, if victory they could obtain!

Men only expose themselves to great danger, or subject themselves to toil and privation, when spurred on by interest, and yet when the Apostles persisted in preaching the resurrection of Christ, it was utterly opposed to their own interest, as far as the things of this world were concerned. They had deserted him in his lifetime, and if he were not risen again, what could they expect from him? Were they not sufficiently acquainted with the hatred of the Jews to know that torture and death would be the only fruits of their obstinacy?

But supposing even that the Apostles had wished to deceive others, could they have done so? In that case there must have been a preconcerted plan, and a collusion amongst five hundred witnesses regarding the resurrection is a manifest absurdity. What! would they all, men and women as they were, have been stupid enough to imagine that they could deceive the world, nor yet shrink from the fear of exposure? Again, suppose the plot already formed, it must

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be sustained and carried out; everything must be so well concerted, that not the slightest discrepancy shall appear; the ever-varying interest of so many persons must become fixed and unchangeable; there must be amongst them neither jealousy, nor disputes, nor discussions, which must and will arise in every human assembly. But that is not all: the disciples are put to the torture, and they are then promised life and rich rewards if they will only cease to give testimony of Jesus Christ; they asked but for a word, nay, even a sign of consent, but they remain immovable. If even some of them were so base as to deny their faith, yet they made no allusion to any plot or secret; they renounce their faith, and that is all. Nay, some of these unhappy persons, torn with remorse, went back and presented themselves to the executioners, demanding as a favour that they should be permitted to expiate their apostacy with their blood.

Let us now see in what way the Jews sought to refute the truth of the resurrection: they assert that, by night, and while the guards were asleep, the disciples of Jesus carried off the body of their master. Now, the testimony of the Apostles, and that of the guards agree in establishing this fact, that the body of Jesus which had been visited in the tomb on Saturday evening, was not there on Sunday morning. The Jews assert that it was carried off by the Apostles, and these latter maintain that it rose from the dead; if one of these propositions be found true, the falsehood of the other will of course follow.

The guards had been chosen from amongst the Jews; an important object was in view; it was supposed that the Apostles might come; it may well be believed, therefore, how strict were the orders given and how secretly the password was kept; the guards well knew that in their position the slightest negligence would be treated as a crime, and moreover, they had to watch ~~but~~ for one night. The Apostles, on the other hand, were timid, and not yet recovered from the fright into which they were thrown by the death of their master; they had everything to fear from the chiefs of the synagogue, and is it then likely that they would have engaged in such an enterprise? Such fables might pass current with a child, but how could a man, endowed with common sense and judgment, for a moment believe them.

"But" say the guards, "it was while we slept." And if they were asleep, how did they know what happened? How could they account for what passed during their sleep? Such is, nevertheless, the vague testimony on which the synagogue rests in deciding the most important question ever mooted in the world. Nor is this all: the soldiers confess that they slept, though bound to remain wakeful and watching at their post; they acknowledge that they suffered the body of Christ to be conveyed away, while their duty was to guard it. They were guilty then, even on their own showing of culpable neglect, and every one knows the severe punishment which the military authorities have ever inflicted on him who betrays trust, and neglects his post. Why, then, were not these men punished? When Peter was miraculously delivered from the prison wherein he had been confined by Herod, the soldiers who had been on guard over him were put to the torture, notwithstanding that they were found at their post, and the doors duly closed. Now the disappearance of Christ's body was of much more importance, the fault of the guards much more serious, and the interest of the people much greater? How is it, then, that the greatest enemy of religion has never been able to bring forward the slightest proof of any reproach, or any punishment inflicted by the Sanhedrim on those faithless guards.

Again, do we find that any attempt was made to prosecute any of the Apostles for this supposed trick of theirs? No such thing. What! there had been so many precautions taken to prevent the crime, yet when it was committed the offence was passed over without a word!—and then when it was boldly declared that Jesus Christ had risen again; when numbers of both Jews and Gentiles were converted to his faith, there was nothing said of this pretended carrying off; people were only prohibited from speaking in the name of Jesus. Wherefore this silence, when a single word would have sufficed to annihilate the new belief? It was because the Sanhedrim well knew that no such word would be believed, for that the miracles of the Apostles would prove it false; and that they would thus bring renewed disgrace upon themselves.

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But, it may be asked, why was it that Jesus Christ after his resurrection appeared only to his own disciples?—If it had pleased him to make his resurrection as public as his death, it would have been as impossible to doubt the one as the other, and his adversaries would have been struck dumb.

But what adversaries do they mean who say so? Is it his own contemporaries, or those of the present day?—Why, the former had been eye witnesses of the miracles of Jesus Christ; the sick whom he had cured, and the dead whom he had raised, were in the midst of them, and yet they refused to believe in him; they could not deny the facts, but passion made them dispute their consequences. The sight of Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, would have been yet another miracle, but it would have been useless like the others. If a man chooses to close his eyes, will he see any better for the light being made brighter around him?

And then, speaking of the skeptics of our own times? Does any one suppose that they would be more docile than the doctors of the Sanhedrim, when some of them are heard to assert the impossibility of miracles, others to mock at all human testimony, and reject moral certainty; these last maintaining that evidence which would be more than sufficient in ordinary cases, will not hold good, or produce conviction when miraculous facts are in question.

To pretend that God must furnish for his miracles the most palpable proofs that can be given, is downright blasphemy. Are we to suppose that a fact is not sufficiently demonstrated, if every proof that an opponent may choose to demand be not forthcoming?—What matters it, then, if the resurrection be not proved by an uninterrupted course of miracles, since it has been really and distinctly demonstrated? and truly has it been so; the testimony of the Apostles, the silence of their adversaries, the death of millions of martyrs, the conversion of the world, the entire reform which men in embracing the Christian faith have had and still have to make in their conduct, all these are irrefragable proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and consequently of his divinity, and the truth of all that which he has taught us.

EXAMPLE.—“My brethren,” says St. Augustin, “the

Resurrection of Christ is so certain, that we might take for evidence the soldiers let to guard his body; nevertheless, avarice, which had corrupted a perfidious disciple, was again employed to pervert the first witnesses of the resurrection. "We will pay you well," said the Jews to them, "if you will give out that, while you were asleep, his disciples came and conveyed him away." Truly they had deceived themselves in their search. What have you said? Unhappy adroitness! Is it possible that you cast yourselves so blindly into the depths of detestable malice?—"Say," said the Jews to the soldiers "that whilst you slept, his disciples took him away!" Wretches! Ye yourselves must be really asleep when you bring forward as evidence, sleeping witnesses!

CHAPTER VII.

HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN; AND SITTETH AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD.

Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus Christ assembled his disciples on the top of Mount Olivet, where, raising his hands, he blessed them, and then went a little apart. They saw him ascend, until a cloud concealed him from their view; and quickly there appeared to them two angels, who told them that the Lord should one day come down from heaven as they had seen him ascend. It is said that Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of God his father, to make us understand, by a sensible image borrowed from human things, that he is raised to the highest degree of power and glory in heaven, where he reposes after all his labours as it were on the eternal throne of his empire. When a king associates his son in his royal power, he seats him by his side on the throne, in order to show that he is to be regarded as his equal, and that all the dignitaries of the state are to pay him the respect and obedience due to himself.

Now the Scripture represents God seated on his throne, king of heaven and earth; so, when we say that Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God, it is to be understood that he being, as God, equal to his Father, he is, as man:

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by the greatness of his glory and power, far above all creatures, because that his sacred humanity has the glorious privilege of being united to the Word.

The Son of God, amid all his glory, occupies himself with us, and is attentive to all our wants; he fills the part of a Mediator, ever presenting to his Father the wound which he received during his passion, to propitiate him on behalf of men. He is our advocate and our defender; and the voice of his blood shall be ever more powerful in obtaining mercy for us, if we only labour to apply it to our souls, than that of our crimes in drawing down on us the chastisements of divine justice.

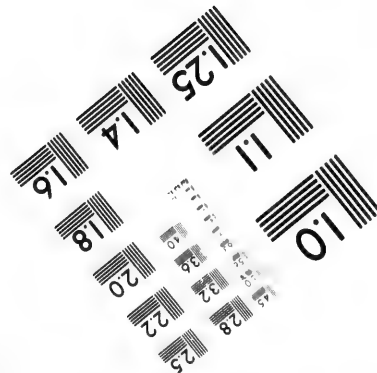
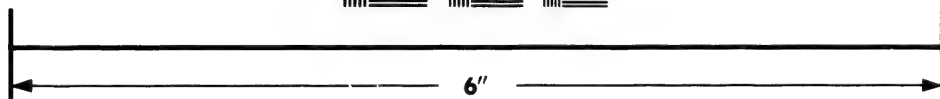
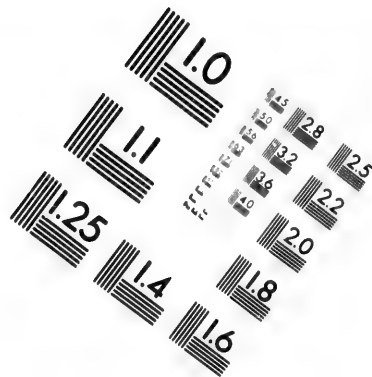
Jesus Christ is in heaven as our King and our Lord, he has a supreme dominion over us, not only because that he created us and preserves us from day to day, but also because of his having redeemed us. We are then the heritage of Jesus Christ, his conquest, purchased by his blood.

Jesus Christ in heaven is our Pontiff; he exercised that function on the cross, by offering himself to his Father as a victim of propitiation for our sins, and he still exercises it in heaven where, seated at his right hand, he presents himself before him on our behalf; and as his is an eternal priesthood, he can always save those who approach God through his mediation. Having then for our high-priest Jesus, the Son of God, who ascended to the highest heavens, let us present ourselves with confidence before his throne, to the end that we may obtain mercy, and secure the assistance of his grace in all our necessities, for our Pontiff is not one who is unable to compassionate our weakness, since he has vouchsafed to undergo all our pains and trials, though himself free from sin.

Finally, Jesus Christ is in heaven as our head, that is to say, he is the head of a body whose members we are. This body is the church, and Jesus Christ is to the church what the head is to the body; he imparts to it life, and animates it with his spirit; every grace, every good thought, all holy desires, and all good works, in short all virtue proceeds from that fulness which is in Christ, our head.

EXAMPLE.—A gentleman, who was a fervent Christian.





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made the pilgrimage of the Holy Land in a most edifying manner. After having confessed, and received with pious fervour the sacrament of Christ's body, he went first to Nazareth, where the great mystery of the Incarnation was wrought; he then repaired to Bethlehem, the birth-place of our Lord; to the banks of the Jordan where Jesus was baptised by St. John; then to the desert, where Jesus had spent forty days in solitude; then to Mount Thabor where he was transfigured; to the supper-room, in Jerusalem where he instituted the adorable Sacrament of the Eucharist; to the garden of Olives; to the Pretorium, and to Calvary, the scenes of his humiliations and sufferings; to the place where his body was entombed and rose from the dead; and finally, to the top of Mount Olivet, whence, after blessing his Apostles, he ascended to heaven in triumph. In each of the different stations which that faithful Christian made in honour of the mysteries of the Saviour's life, his heart was inflamed with love, which broke out in the following prayer—"Oh Jesus! Jesus! my most amiable Saviour! where should I seek thee on the earth, now that thou hast quitted it!—Permit me only to follow thee to that heaven where thou art!" Scarcely was the prayer uttered, when it was granted. He expired: he died of love for his Saviour!

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CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS CHRIST SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING
AND THE DEAD.

ARTICLE I.

OF DEATH.

Thou shalt die! such was the sentence pronounced on Adam after his fall, a sentence which we daily see carried into execution. Nothing is more certain than our death, and nothing more uncertain than when it is to be. We shall all die, that is to say, we shall quit this earth which we now inhabit, and enter upon eternity. At our death we

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must leave all, relations, friends, riches, honours, and employments, without exception, and without return. At death, too, all shall leave us, all but virtue and vice.

If the very thought of death be insupportable to the lovers of this world, to the voluptuous, in short to all sinners, how terrible must be the reality when it comes!—O dreadful moment, which discovers to their view the nothingness of those sublunary things which they have loved so much, and the solidity of that virtue which they have known but to despise!

Nothing is more uncertain than the time and the manner of our death; shall we die suddenly or of a lingering disease? Shall we have time to prepare ourselves, or shall we be taken by surprise? Are we to die in a few days, in a moment even, or shall we live to extreme old age? Shall we die in sin or in the state of grace?—Alas! none can tell; the only thing that is certain is that we must die, and that in all probability we shall die as we have lived; men usually gather in but what they have sowed; and death is the echo of life. Another certainty is, that the destiny of the dying is immutably fixed; that death decides all; that if we die in a state of grace we shall be eternally happy; and that if we die in mortal sin, we shall be everlastingly wretched.

Since death is inevitable, and must decide our eternal fate, we ought to prepare ourselves for it, and profit by the time which remains to us. In this the stake is our greatest, nay, our only interest, for, says Jesus Christ, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he lose his own soul?" Alas! will it afford one any consolation in the eternal furnace, to remember that he was great, rich, and powerful, and made a large fortune while here on earth? Truly, he will then see the extent of his error, and that virtue was the only solid wealth. "I have been the master of the greatest empire in the world" said Septimus Severus, when dying, "I have been all that mortal could be, and yet nothing remains to me at the present moment—nothing which can avail me anything." A herald, carrying the shroud destined to wrap up the body of Saladin, cried out, by order of that prince! "Behold all that the great Saladin can bear hence of all the dominions he has conquered!"

Trifling affairs are dispatched without much application, but those which are more important demand much care and attention. As it is the mark of a weak mind to be engrossed with insignificant matters, so also does it denote a well-ordered mind to employ itself with those which are of greater moment. If, then, we should proportion our care and application to the importance of the affair in hand, what can be more important than to die well? Is it too much for life to prepare itself for death? Is it too much to employ the few years of life in preparing for eternity? Does a man condemned to death attach any great value to the things of the world? Such, then, ought our dispositions to be: death pursues us, and will inevitably strike us down, perhaps at the moment when we least expect his coming. Let us, therefore, make a daily preparation, since any day may be the term of our existence. Let us not deceive ourselves, or remain under any illusion on a point so truly *important*: let us not put off till the last moment, for perhaps a moment may not be given us to prepare. "He" said Augustin, "who hath promised pardon to the repenting sinner, hath not promised him the morrow for his conversion." It is then rashness, nay, even a crime to put off our preparation for death till we are seized with a fatal malady. What! at a moment when one is unable to attend to even the most trifling concern, how can he acquit himself of a duty the most arduous and the most momentous—of a task which demands all the faculties of the soul!—How can a man receive the Sacraments with fruit when he scarcely knows what he is doing? How can he clear up the dark mazes of his conscience at a time when soul and body are tortured and weighed down with the pangs and horrors of death? How can he prove to God that he detests sin, he who has so loved it, and delivered himself up to its dominion as long as he possibly could? Ah! It is not then the sinner who quits sin, it is sin, on the contrary which deserts the sinner. The consequence is, that God-almost invariably permits those who have lived impenitent, to die in the same state. When the contrary happens, it is by a miracle: God can work that miracle, but it is a fatal and damnable presumption to expect it while living on in a state of sin.

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EXAMPLES.—A young French officer, forced to quit his country, retired to Spain, and touched by divine grace, he resolved to devote the remainder of his life to prepare for his last end. Full of that thought, he presented himself at a monastery where the rule was said to be most austere, and, after many entreaties, was at length admitted. During his noviciate, he wrote as follows to his sister: "There is not a beggar in all Spain who is not better fed than we are, and more comfortable as regards all the wants of the body! Nevertheless, none of us would exchange our lot with that of an emperor, being well aware that death will speedily confound the monarch with the meanest of his subjects. Each individual, in going hence, bears with him only his works; and then how pleasant it is to have '*sown in tears*;' the pain and the privation is passed, and the joy which then commenceth shall last throughout eternity." Five months after his profession, he was attacked with a dropsy, which after four months of tedious suffering carried him to the grave. As he lay on his straw and ashes, he took the hand of the Father Abbot with an expression of gratitude which sensibly affected the whole community. "How great is my happiness!" he exclaimed, "you have opened to me the gates of heaven by admitting me into your house!—oh! how happy I am in that I have endeavoured to prepare for death! how sweet it is to die when one firmly hopes to pass from earth to heaven!—Oh! thrice blessed are they who take due note of these words, "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

What can the just man regret at his death? The good's of the earth? His heart has been ever detached from them. His parents, his friends?—He knows that he does not lose them for ever. *We shall meet again*, said a young lady of Lyons to her sorrowing relations, when after having long suffered the most cruel pains, she was at length at the point of death. *We shall meet again*, said she, and she died pronouncing those words. A superb monument was raised to her memory, whereon she is represented in a sitting posture writing on a pillar: *We shall meet again!*

A child, having but a few moments to live, and seeing

his mother weeping, said to her: "Have you not often told me that in order to see God, we must die?" Yet he was scarcely seven years old!

ARTICLE II.

OF JUDGMENT.

"It is appointed" says St. Paul, "for all men once to die, and after death judgment."

The immortality of the soul necessarily supposes a judgment which is to decide its eternal fate; for assuredly the just and the godless man cannot have one and the same destiny. Faith teaches us that there shall be even two judgments, the private or particular, and the general judgments. The particular judgment is that which every soul must undergo immediately after death, regarding the evil which it has committed, and the good which it should have practised but did not. This judgment will fix its doom for all eternity. Immediately after this particular judgment, those souls which are only found guilty of trifling faults shall be sent to purgatory, in order to have their sins washed away before they can enter heaven; those who are free from all sin are instantly admitted into heaven; while such as are stained with any mortal sin are cast into hell, awaiting the general resurrection which shall take place at the end of the world.

Then shall be the general judgment, wherein the sentence already pronounced in the particular judgment shall be published and confirmed. The general judgment shall be preceded by fearful signs, which Our Lord himself has described in the Gospel. There shall be wars, famines, plagues and earthquakes; the sun and the moon shall be darkened; the stars shall seem to fall from the firmament; the waves of the sea shall be agitated so as to make a terrific noise; and men shall wither away with fear of what is to come upon the earth. Then the final moment being arrived, in the twinkling of an eye the dead shall arise at the sound of the last trumpet. The sign of the Son of man, that is to say, a luminous cross shall appear in the air, and Jesus Christ shall visibly descend from heaven, with great power and majesty,

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to render to every one according to his works. He shall be attended by Angels, who shall separate the good from the wicked. Ah! how terrible will that separation be, and how different will be the fate of those separated! The just shall be placed at the right hand of the Supreme Judge, and the wicked at his left. Then shall every conscience be laid open before the whole world, so that even that which had been most secret and most carefully concealed in the depths of the soul shall be drawn forth and revealed.

The righteous man, despised and trampled on in this world, shall then appear adorned with the lustre of those good works which he had concealed from the eyes of men; and the sinner shall be overwhelmed with confusion to see thus publicly manifested the vices and crimes which he had so carefully hidden. Then shall vice appear as it really is, in all its native deformity, and covered with its proper infamy. At that moment how inexpressibly happy shall he be who has turned a deaf ear in this life to the seducing discourse of the wicked, and resisted the contagion of bad example! How well he shall be repaid for the combats he here sustained, and the raillery which he endured for his faith! But how great, on the other hand shall be the despair of the libertine when he sees revealed before heaven and earth, the crimes which he committed under cover of the silent night, and when he beholds those whom he had mocked and ridiculed placed amongst the Saints—the children of God! With what detestation will he then regard that vice which before appeared so sweet and so seducing!

But that is only the array, and the prelude of the judgment: what impression will be then made on our minds by the actual sentence of the Sovereign Judge!—All being profoundly silent, the Son of God shall address to those on his right hand these consoling words: "Come! ye blessed of my Father!—come and possess the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world!" Then shall He turn to the reprobates, and thunder forth their sentence: "Depart from me, ye cursed!—into everlasting fire!" No sooner shall the final word be given, than the just shall go to reign with God for all eternity, and the wicked shall be

precipitated into hell, there to burn for ever and ever, without the slightest hope of ever repairing the fatal error of their mortal lives. Let us now anticipate that tremendous judgment, and profit by the advice which Our Lord gives us in the Gospel: "Beware," said He, "lest your hearts sink within you, and that the day may take you by surprise, for it shall surround, even as a net, all who dwell upon the earth! Watch, therefore, and pray, to the end that you may escape the wrath to come, and appear with confidence before the Son of man!"

EXAMPLE.—A certain libertine, who had unhappily given himself up to every vice, had been brought up, nevertheless, in religious principles, a virtuous mother having taken pains to form and foster them in his mind. Thanks to the Christian education which he had received, although he had lost all purity and all sense of virtue, yet he had not lost his Faith. One night, after having spent the day in the excess of wickedness, he had a dream, in which he seemed to stand before the judgment-seat of God. It is scarcely possible to conceive how great was his confusion, fear, and terror. He awoke in a high fever, covered with sweat, and out of his senses. "Let me alone!" said he to those who first spoke to him, "Let me alone!—I have seen the Judge!—Pardon, oh my God!" His debauched companions, hearing that he was sick, and in despair, came to see and console him. "Away!" he cried, "ye are not my friends; I will not see you any more; I have seen my Judge. What severe majesty shone on his countenance!—And oh! how many accusations, how many questions which I could not answer!—All my sins are written down, and I have read them. Ah! how numerous they are, and how enormous! What legions of devils awaited but the signal to carry me off!—I shudder, and will long shudder at the remembrance. Away, ye false friends,—away forever: how happy I shall esteem myself if I can only appease my terrible Judge by the most rigorous penance! Alas! I shall soon appear in reality before his awful tribunal—perhaps this very day. Pardon, oh my God!—I shall never cease to cry 'Pardon me!—have mercy on me!—oh do not destroy me, but have mercy on me!'"

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CHAPTER IX.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY GHOST.

It is not sufficient to believe in the Father Almighty, who has created us; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, who has redeemed us, if we do not at the same time believe in the Holy Ghost by whom we are sanctified.

We ought, therefore, to believe with a firm faith that there is in the Godhead a third person, which is the Holy Ghost; that third person proceeds from the Father and the Son, and has the same divinity as the two other persons. Thus the Holy Ghost is equal to the Father and the Son; he is eternal, almighty, infinite, as they are; he has the same perfections, and in a word, is the same God as the Father and the Son. It is in his name, as in that of the Father and of the Son that we have been baptized; hence, as he is of the same Godhead with the Father and the Son we are to pay him the same homage and adoration. From this it follows that the Holy Ghost is adored and glorified conjointly with the Father and the Son, and that we conclude all our prayers with these words: "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost!"

This same Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles on Whit-Sunday, in the form of tongues of fire, filling them thus with courage and strength to preach the Gospel, and to seal its truth by the effusion of their blood. He also imparted to them the gift of tongues, and the graces necessary for the establishment of the Church and the conversion of nations.

To the Holy Ghost is particularly attributed the sanctification of men, because that he is a spirit of love, and that it is he who diffuses through our souls that charity which purifies them. It is, then, the Holy Ghost who imparts to us that grace, which is the life of the soul, as the soul is of the body: the soul has no life but in as much as it is united with the Holy Ghost, and is inhabited and animated by grace: neither has it any tendency towards God but through the influence of the Holy Ghost, and it can do nothing available for its salvation but through his impulse and inspiration.

The Holy Ghost is called in Scripture the Spirit of Truth, which means, that he is the source of all truth, and the master by whom it is taught. He it was who in a moment filled the Apostles with intelligence and understanding, and communicated to them the most sublime knowledge. It was He, too, who spake through the Prophets and Evangelists. It is he, moreover, who still instructs our minds, and dissipates by his divine light the darkness of our ignorance; he points out to us the way that leads to heaven, and gives us strength to walk therein. "Thy Holy Spirit" says the prophet, "shall conduct me in the right way, the end of which is salvation." The Holy Ghost speaks to us internally, to turn us away from evil, and inspire us to do good. Thus it is the Holy Ghost that we resist when we cast off the thoughts which would turn us from sin, and lead us to the practice of virtue.

EXAMPLE.—Simon the magician was early addicted to the practice of magic. His enchantments and illusions were so powerful that his followers called him the Virtue of God. But when St. Peter and St. John went into Samaria in order to impose hands on the newly-baptized who had been converted by the preaching and the numerous miracles of St. Phillip, one of the seven deacons, Simon believed in Jesus Christ and was baptized. Nevertheless, beholding the prodigies operated on those who received the Holy Ghost, he dared to aspire to the power of imposing hands, and to turn to his own glory the wonders which he hoped to perform in imitation of the Apostles. With this intention he offered them money and said: "Give me the power that ye yourselves have, to the end that I also may be able to impart the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands." But Peter said to him: "Let thy money perish with thee, because thou hast believed that the gift of God may be bought: go, and do penance!" Very far from obeying, Simon turned himself again to magic, got entangled in every vicious pursuit, and became the secret enemy of the Apostles. After having infected all Samaria with the most extravagant errors, he came to Rome; and seeking to persuade the emperor Nero that he was God, he promised to ascend into heaven before the

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whole multitude. All the people assembled to behold such a wondrous sight, and Simon did actually ascend from the earth, or rather he was carried aloft by the devil; but St. Peter began to pray, and God heard his prayer. The demon ceased to sustain the magician; he fell suddenly to the ground, all bruised and mangled, and instantly expired. From this Simon comes the word *Simony*, that is to say the detestable sin of those who would buy or sell the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost.

LASAUSSE.

CHAPTER X.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH.

ARTICLE I.

I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH.

THERE was always a Church, even from the very beginning of the world, that is to say, that there were always men who, making profession of believing in God, of adoring and serving him, expected the Messiah, and hoped for salvation through his merits, according to the oracle of the prophecies. Nevertheless, the adorers of the true God did not always form one society, united by visible and external bonds: before Christ, the Jews alone, as the chosen people, had a common law and common practices of religion. But Jesus Christ, coming into the world to save all men, gave unto them new means of salvation; it was his pleasure to gather them into one body, and to give to them a new Law, which is the Law of grace.

The Apostles, having received the Holy Ghost went forth from the house wherein they had been assembled, and announced the resurrection of Christ in the midst of Jerusalem. Three thousand Jews were converted by St. Peter's first preaching, and five thousand when he preached a second time. The number of the faithful increased every day, and those new converts, regenerated by Baptism and renewed by the Holy Spirit, displayed to the world the rarest example of pure and perfect virtue. The Apostles afterwards preached

the word of God with the same success throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; thence they passed into Syria and the provinces of Asia Minor, into Macedonia, Greece, and the greater part of the then known world, announcing the Gospel, that is to say, the glad tidings of redemption to all men.

Meanwhile, the Jews obstinately resisted the spread of the Gospel, and furiously persecuted the disciples of Jesus Christ. The Pagans, on the other hand, opposed its establishment with all their might. All that was great and powerful amongst them, declared at once against the new religion; but, notwithstanding the fury of the Jews, the opposition of earth's potentates, and the general corruption of mankind, so long blindly devoted to a religion entirely sensual, the Apostles founded the Church of Christ in every country and in every clime. Their zeal was caught up and imitated by those whom they had chosen to succeed them in the ministry, and so was the precious deposit of Faith transmitted from one generation to another, even till it has reached ourselves in all its original purity and brightness.

In order to form an idea of the marvellous establishment of Christianity, let us picture to ourselves twelve men chosen from the very dregs of society, without wealth, without learning, without human support, and to whom their master had even promised nothing in this world but persecution, torment, and death: such were the Apostles. Can it be supposed that twelve such men would have dared to undertake the conversion of the whole world had they not been animated by the spirit of God? How could they have set about converting the nations, Greeks and Romans, Jews and Pagans, and that too, by proposing for their acceptance mysteries the most incomprehensible, and a code of morality the most severe that could be devised?

Nevertheless, these twelve men, destitute as they were of human aid, having no other arms than the cross, no other weapon than the word, nor other defence than invincible patience, these men not only conceived such a design but carried it into execution: they preached a doctrine which captivates the mind while it restrains the heart; they preached it in the very heart of the Roman empire, in cities the

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most populous, the most wealthy, the most learned, and the most voluptuous; in Antioch, in Alexandria, in Ephesus, in Corinth, in Athens, and even in Rome. The world started up in opposition to the new doctrines, and every thing was done to stifle Christianity in its very cradle, and put a stop to its farther progress: confiscations, banishment, imprisonment, torments; all were resorted to, and yet Christianity was every where established by persuasion alone, in despite of all the adverse efforts of human power, and of human wisdom, aided by the passions, interest, policy, and the most outrageous violence.

To give up a religion which prescribes painful and irksome practices, which prohibits every vice, and to embrace one more tolerant to the senses, one which permits men to give a free course to their passions, this is a thing easy to understand; but to forsake a religion which fosters the passions, and embrace the cross and a life of penance, thereby exposing one's self, moreover, to the loss of all worldly goods and even life itself, this is what persuasion and conviction could only effect, and it is precisely what was every where seen, in the establishment of Christianity. When all this is considered, how can we forbear from saying: *The finger of God is there!* For, in short, the Apostles have either worked miracles in order to convince the nations of the truth of what they taught, or they converted them without the testimony of miracles. If they wrought miracles, then it was God himself who presided over their enterprise; if, on the contrary, they succeeded in convincing the whole world without miracles, the proof of their divine mission would be just as strong, since it is only Omnipotence itself which could produce that simultaneous conviction, amid all the host of obstacles which stood opposed thereto. The conversion of the world, if operated without miracles, would be in itself the greatest of miracles.

EXAMPLE.—St. Simplician, who had been as a father to St. Ambrose, had the same affection for Victorinus of whom we are about to speak.

Victorinus a celebrated orator, had been professor of Rhetoric at Rome; he had passed his life in the study of the

liberal sciences, and had attained a great proficiency in all of them. He had read, examined, and explained almost all the writings of the ancient philosophers, and had had the honour of instructing all the most distinguished of the Roman senators. He had, in fine, followed his profession so successfully, that a statue had been erected to his honour in public square of Rome, a distinction then considered the highest that man could attain. Yet he was still a pagan, an adorer of idols: and not only that, but he employed all his eloquence in persuading others to adore them as he did.

What extraordinary grace did it require to touch and convert such a heart!—Behold the means which God employed in doing so. Victorinus began to read the Holy Scriptures, and having for some time applied himself to that study, together with other books explanatory of the Christian Religion, he said one day to St. Simplician: “I have something to tell you which will interest you very much: I am a Christian.”—“I do not believe a word of it,” replied the Saint, “nor shall I believe you, until I see you in the church where the faithful are wont to assemble.”—“What then,” exclaimed Victorinus, “is it only within the inclosure of four walls that one is a Christian?” so it went on for some time, as often as Victorinus protested that he was a Christian, Simplician made him the same reply, and the other always put it off with a laugh and a jest.

The truth was, that he feared to exasperate his pagan friends, as their anger and opposition would be sure to crush him, if once called forth, and this risk he could not bring himself to incur. But after a time courage and generosity were given him from above because of his close application to the study of religion, and the docility with which he opened his heart to its truths, and he became convinced that it would be an enormous crime to blush for believing the mysteries of Jesus Christ, while appearing to glory in the sacriligious superstitions of paganism. No sooner did he obtain this conviction than he hastened to tell St. Simplician at a time, too, when that holy man was least expecting him. “Let us go to the church,” said he, “I am resolved to show myself a Christian, nor content myself longer with being one in heart.” Simplician, transported with joy, immediately took

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him to the church, and had his name entered on the list of those who demanded Baptism. All the city of Rome was struck with admiration and astonishment; and the hearts of the faithful were filled with joy, because of the celebrity and high reputation of that great man.

At length the happy day arrived when he was to make his profession of faith, in order to be baptised. It was then the custom in the Roman church to make this profession in a regular formula of words which the catechumens learned by heart, and pronounced aloud before all the people. The priests, through respect, would have waived this custom, and permitted Victorinus to make his profession in private, a privilege which was sometimes granted to timid persons; but Victorinus declined, declaring that he would proclaim aloud, in presence of the whole assembly, his belief in those doctrines which were to guide him to endless happiness. No sooner had he appeared in the tribune than a sudden transport of joy seized all hearts, and his name was echoed aloud from mouth to mouth, and although each one restrained his joyful emotion through respect for the sanctity of the place and the sacrament about to be administered, yet all around was heard the murmured exclamation: *It is Victorinus! It is Victorinus!*—But every sound was speedily hushed, in order to permit him to speak; whereupon, he with holy fervour, repeated in a clear, distinct voice, his belief in the truths which form the basis of our faith. Willingly would the people have taken him and carried him around in triumph, for every heart overflowed with the joy of beholding him a Christian. This splendid conversion had great consequences, and when St. Augustin was informed of it by St. Simplician, he acknowledged that he felt strongly moved to follow the example of Victorinus; this intention he soon after carried into execution, under the ministry of St. Ambrose, to whom St. Simplician had been a father from his baptism. (*Taken from the Confessions of St. Augustin, book, viii.*)

We should learn from this example, 1st, not to delay in answering to the divine grace when it calls us, lest it may be entirely withdrawn;

2nd, To repair, by some heroic action, our unfaithfulness and resistance to the graces we may have received;

3rd, To remain so much the more faithful to its dictates, that we have been long resisting its inspirations.

ARTICLE II.

The establishment of the Christian Church, (continued.)

CONSTANCY OF THE MARTYRS.

THE persecution against the church of Christ did not end with the life of the Apostles; for a period of not less than three hundred years the powers of the earth continued to make war against it. During that time there are on record ten persecutions following the edicts of the Roman emperors, and it is matter of history that while those persecutions lasted, several millions of Christians of every rank, sex and age, suffered torments and death, in testimony of their Faith. The most fearful torments were invented purposely for them; they stretched them on the rack by means of cords fastened to their feet and hands; they hung them up by the hands with weights attached to their feet, and in that condition, whipped them with rods or lashes pointed with iron until the ribs and bowels were laid open. When the martyrs survived these tortures, salt and vinegar were cast on their wounds, in order to make them still more painful; and at other times, the wounds were torn open again, after they had commenced to heal. The very prisons became a new species of torment for the Christians, the most infectious and unwholesome being reserved for them; into these dungeons they were thrown naked and lacerated all over with the blows and injuries they had received, with their feet shackled, and being made to lie down on the broken stones with which their tormentors had had the barbarity to strew the floors of the cells. Sometimes they were left to die of hunger, and if they did give them food, it was to keep them alive for new torments. They were generally forbidden to hold converse with any one, because it was a well-known fact, that even in the midst of their sufferings they were wont to convert many infidels, even to the gaolers and the soldiers who guarded them. The concluding punishment was either to be beheaded, or burned

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alive, to be cast from a high rock into the sea, or to be given to the wild beasts for prey. Yet did the martyrs continue firm and unshaken amid their long and cruel sufferings; tho' very torments they endured seeming to give them fresh courage.

Neither was it men only, who displayed such admirable constancy: for delicate females and even children did as much: so powerful was the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in fortifying their hearts and souls.

We find in Ecclesiastical History, examples of courage and of fortitude, which are, not only above human strength, but beyond all admiration. It is impossible to read without astonishment the account of the sufferings of the martyrs of Lyons and of Vienna, under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius; just as marvellous, is what the historian Eusebius relates of the martyrs of Palestine, and what Sozomenes tells of those of Persia; these latter accounts are found in the original acts of the African martyrs, &c. All these generous champions endured, with the most unshaken patience tortures, the bare recital of which makes one shudder: some even suffered with joy, and went of their own free will to the torture, fearful that they might be spared, and lose the crown of martyrdom. St. Lawrence, when stretched over a red-hot furnace, desired his executioners to turn him on the other side, wishing that the fire might catch his whole frame. What language in the midst of the most fearful torments! Whence did those Christian heroes obtain that invincible courage which enabled them to brave torments and death? Who was it that gave them that strength of mind superior to all that tyrants could devise? Truly, their natural weakness must have been sustained from above, and hence that religion, which they sealed and cemented with their blood, is indeed a divine religion. Never could it have subsisted, had not an Almighty hand held it up against attacks so multiplied and so violent. But God brought it triumphantly forth from the furious assaults of its enemies; all their efforts, meant to effect its destruction, tended but to secure it; the more cruel were the persecutions, the more did the faith progress: the blood of the martyrs was as a fruitful seed bringing forth new Christians, so

that the whole world, after having furiously persecuted the disciples of Jesus Christ, was obliged to exclaim: "How great is the God of the Christians!" and then it embraced the faith for professing which, it had slain the martyrs!

EXAMPLE.—The Emperor Valens, who was an Arian, prohibited the Catholics of Edessa, where he then was, from making any public display of their religion, under pain of death. Far from obeying this command, the Catholics assembled as usual in their accustomed place. The Emperor being informed of this, ordered the prefect to go on the morrow, with a company of soldiers, to their place of assembly, and put them all to the sword. The prefect received the order with horror, for he was not a cruel man; and he secretly apprised the Catholics of the order given him, which he dared neither put off nor evade. Instead of keeping them at home on that day, this intimation only served to bring them together in greater numbers. They rejoiced in so favourable an opportunity being given them to shed their blood in defence of the faith. The prefect set out with his soldiers. In one of the streets leading to the Catholic place of meeting, he met a young woman, holding a little child by the hand: "Where are you going so fast?" he asked. "I am going," she replied, "where all the other Catholics are going." "Stop, then!" said the prefect, "do you not know that I am commanded by the emperor to put every one to death that I shall find there?" "I know it," she answered, "and that is the reason why I am hastening with my child, the only one that God hath given me, that both he and I may have the happiness of dying for the faith of Christ." The prefect, admiring her constancy, turned back again, and sought the presence of the emperor, to whom he related his interview with the woman. Valens was exceedingly confused by this incident, and, being unable to withhold his admiration for the courage and constancy of the Catholics, he delayed not to quit the city, so that peace was speedily restored to the disciples of the Saviour.

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ARTICLE III.

MARKS OF THE CHURCH.

THE Church is the society of the faithful collected into one and the same body, governed by its legitimate pastors, of whom Jesus Christ is the invisible head; the Pope, the successor of St. Peter, being his representative on earth.— Nevertheless, as there are several societies which take and usurp the name of *the Church*, it is necessary to describe the marks which distinguish the *true Church* from those which are but *nominal*.

There are four infallible marks which denote the true Church, viz.: its unity, its sanctity, its Catholicity, and Apostolicity.

1st. The Church is *one*, because there is but one single Church wherein we may attain salvation, and because all its members profess the same faith, participate in the same sacraments, are animated by the same spirit, united in the same bond of charity, aspire to the same end, and obey the same pastors.

2nd. The Church is *Holy*, because her doctrine is holy; her sacraments are holy; there are no saints beyond her pale; and because Jesus Christ, her invisible head, is the author of all her sanctity.

3rd. The Church is *Catholic*, or *Universal*; that is to say, she is neither limited by time nor space: she embraces all time; for she has always existed, without any interruption, and will exist till the consummation of ages, according to the promise of her divine Founder. All the other societies, on the contrary, bear on their front, so to say, the marks of their recent origin; the date of the birth of each too, is clearly ascertained, which is in itself a sufficient proof that none of them is the true Church of Christ. The Church embraces all space; the faithful, of whom she is composed, being spread over all the countries of the earth, whilst each of the other societies is contained within some one kingdom or state. The Church is far more extensive than any of the other societies, calling themselves Christian; hence it is, that she every where receives even from her very enemies, the name of *Catholic*.

4th. The Church is Apostolic; that is to say, she was founded by the Apostles, and has been ever since governed by their successors. The other societies, in separating themselves from the true Church, have lost that succession. Every one, therefore, can easily ascertain whether he belongs to the true Church, by examining whether he is united to the Pope, through the medium of his pastor and his bishop.

The true Church is visible before all men; so that we have but to open the eyes of our minds and we behold her. Every where she appears as one great body, professing the same faith, believing in the same mysteries, receiving the same sacraments, and implicitly confiding in the divine origin of the authority of her ministers.

The true Church is also called the Roman Church; because the Pope, the successor of St. Peter and Bishop of Rome, is her visible head.

EXAMPLE.—St. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who had been a disciple of St. Polycarp, said to Florinus, who was disseminating doctrines contrary to those of the Catholic Church: "Your doctrine is not that of the bishops who have gone before you. It seems to me as though I still heard the blessed Polycarp relate the conversations which he had held with John and others who had seen the Saviour, and the accounts which they were wont to give of his miracles and his teachings. I can assure you, before God, that if that holy bishop had heard the doctrine which you teach, he would have closed his ears against it, and exclaim, as he used to do: '*Good God! hast thou spared me so long, but to hear such things spoken?*' And he would instantly have taken his flight, fearful to hear such doctrine promulgated."

LASAUSSE.

ARTICLE IV.

ON THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH.

JESUS CHRIST has given to the pastors of the Church the power of teaching and of governing the faithful in matters appertaining to salvation. "Go!" said he to his Apostles,

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"Go, teach all nations, teaching them to do all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." In virtue of this promise, then, the Church is infallible in her teachings as regards faith and morals, and that in whatever way she decides, whether assembled in council, or dispersed abroad, having with her Jesus Christ, who is the Fountain of all truth; being ever enlightened and directed by his spirit, which is the spirit of truth, she can never promulgate error. Hence it is that she is styled by the Apostle St. Paul, *the pillar and the ground of truth*. Hence it is, too, that the great body of her pastors can never be deceived in what relates to faith and morals; the judgments which she pronounces, whether in proposing to the faithful the truths of religion, or in condemning the errors which rise up against the faith, are at all times infallible and as such entitled to perfect submission. The Church is the chair of truth; she speaks to men in the name of God, and when we submit our mind to her teachings and decisions, it is to God himself that we offer the homage of our faith. "He who heareth you, heareth me," said our Lord to his Apostles, "and he who despiseth you, despiseth me also; whosoever will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen and a publican." The voice of our pastors is, therefore, the voice of God. Hence the Apostles, aware of the high privilege they had received from Christ, placed at the head of the first judgment they pronounced, these remarkable words: "It hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us"—in order to make us understand that their decision was that of God himself. It was, in fact, necessary that Jesus Christ should give to his church that infallible authority. If there were no tribunal to decide dogmatically on what is to be believed, each of the faithful would wander away in his own thoughts and imaginations, and there would be no longer a uniformity of belief. Were not this tribunal infallible, there would be reason to doubt the truth of its decisions, and the faithful would remain wavering and uncertain, exposed to be carried about by every wind of doctrine. It was then the divine wisdom of Jesus Christ which secured to his Church the privilege of being preserved from all error in her teachings

Jesus Christ has given to the pastors of the church power to govern the faithful; this power of jurisdiction is exercised by the pope and the bishops in the assemblies of the church: the power of the bishops consists, 1st, in the exercise of that power which they received at their consecration, of remitting sins, and of transmitting to priests that same power, with whatever reserve they may deem proper; 2nd, in the power of binding and unloosing, that is to say, retaining and forgiving sins, and remitting the penalty incurred by sin; 3rd, in that of governing the faithful according to the doctrine and discipline of the church.

By the discipline of the church is meant, the rule which the church has made in virtue of the authority given her by Christ, for the guidance of both priests and laity, together with the usages and ceremonies of the Holy Sacrifice, and of divine service.

This power of jurisdiction which abides with the chief ministers of Christ and pastors of the church, extends and has authority only over those who are submissive to the church, and not at all over those who are entirely and openly separated from her communion, such as pagans and infidels.

EXAMPLE.—During the schism of Antiochus, St. Jerome was very uneasy in his desert. Being asked with whom he was in communion, whether with Vital, or Meletius, or Paulinus, who were all three rending the flock asunder. On that occasion, he wrote to the Pope St. Damasus in these terms: "Following no other chief but Jesus Christ, I am attached to the communion of your Holiness, that is to say, to the chair of St. Peter. I know that the church was built on that foundation. Whoever eateth the lamb outside that house, is a profaner; whoever is without the ark of Noah perishes in the flood; whoever gathereth not with you only scattereth abroad; I pray you, therefore, to tell me with whom I am to communicate." The sovereign pontiff paid attention to this request of St. Jerome, and in consequence of the instructions received from Rome, that illustrious doctor adopted the communion of Paulinus, by whom he was ordained priest.—The only way to preserve ourselves from

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ST. JEROME *Letter 57.*

ARTICLE V.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH THERE IS NO SALVATION.

THERE is perhaps no one phrase which has been (and that for nearly two centuries) so much abused as that one *Outside the Church there is no salvation*, and yet no truth is more easily demonstrated.

What we are about to say on this important subject will prove that the Catholic Church must needs profess that doctrine, although it draws down upon her the charge of intolerance, so often brought against her by modern philosophers.

There is one God: man, being his creature, is obliged to obey him, that is to say, to do his will, and to honour him in the way that he himself hath prescribed. From this truth, confirmed as it is even by common sense, it follows that there is a religion, a church, beyond which there is no salvation; in other words, a truth comprising all truth, a light containing all light, and a virtue beyond which there is no virtue.

That religion which is really the true one, ought to be able to say: My founder is from God, or rather he is God himself; his agents have given incontestible proofs of the divinity of their mission. The creed which I propose to you is the only one which comes from God, and the virtues which I command are those which alone conduct to him.

Any religion which cannot speak in this way of itself can never be taken as the true religion, since it cannot even assert that it is so. Is it not, then, perfectly natural for those who are sure that they are in the right way, to warn those whom they see going astray: "You are in the wrong way: you will be lost if you go on!" In fact all religions have spoken so to others: we know how furiously the Pagans persecuted the Christians; we know the abuse wherewith the heretics of all times have loaded the Roman Church. All religions have then in turn maintained that there was no salvation beyond their pale: all religions have, therefore, been

intolerant, in so far as that they could not approve of what was contrary to their own belief. Will any one say that all religions are equally good?—That would be to assert the grossest absurdity, and maintain *yes* and *no* on the same subject. Will it, on the other hand, be said that all are false, by way of pretext for following, none?—But he who would say so must be, in the first place, unreasonable, since he would thereby deny the existence of natural religion, that is to say, the connection which should exist between the intelligent being and his Creator: secondly, he must be rash, denying incontestible facts, believed throughout the entire world, facts which manifestly prove that God *has* spoken to men: thirdly, he must be the most intolerant of all, since he would proscribe all creeds, and condemn all the religious practices by which men have in all ages rendered homage to the Deity.

But if it be evident that man must have a religion, it is not less clear that there can be only one which is true—only one which is pleasing to God, or can lead to everlasting happiness: how can it be supposed that he who despises the Supreme Being who has created him, or who insults him by a criminal life, can have the same fate as he who adores and loves him, and who does him honour by the sanctity of his life; error and truth, vice and virtue cannot have the same end, or conduct to the same happiness; there is then but one Religion, but one Church.

This point ascertained, which of all the religions in the world is the true one, which all men must embrace in order to obtain salvation? It is evidently that which gives the clearest proofs of the sanctity of its morality and the divinity of its institution, that which has been announced by the Prophets; and whose truth has been proved by prodigies; that one, in a word, which Jesus Christ has established, and which has been transmitted even to us by an uninterrupted chain of the successors of the Apostles. It is only the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church which enjoys all these prerogatives.

It is, therefore quite true that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church, she alone possessing all the marks which manifest the divinity of the true religion; that neither is there salvation for him who lives not according to her doc-

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trine, or who dies impenitent; no salvation for him who having it in his power to see the truth, will not take the trouble of adopting it; no salvation for any sectary who, having just reason to doubt the divinity of his religion, does not take the necessary means to ascertain the truth.

It is not the Church then that condemns those who reject her doctrines, and practise not her morality;—no, it is not the Church, it is they who destroy themselves by their obstinacy and bad faith. No, the Church condemns none: she only announces that Truth is *one*, even as God is *one*, and that they who wilfully wander away from its path, are beyond the pale of salvation; she bewails their blindness, and prays for their conversion, acknowledging while she does so that it is only He who sounds the depths of the heart who can judge of the uprightness of theirs, and that He alone can see whether they are guilty in their ignorance, and in their separation from that precious unity, which is the essential mark of truth.

But, it may be asked, what then is to become of so many children who die without baptism, of so many Pagans, Mahometans, Jews, heretics and poor savages? The Holy Scripture says nothing as to the fate of children who die unbaptised, and the Church ventures not to decide the point; but, although it is not said that they go to heaven, it does not follow that they must be as wretched as those whose destruction is their own work. We know that they do not see God, but there is reason to hope that they do not feel all the bitterness of such a privation. As to the nations who might have the true religion, but refuse to embrace it, they shall be justly condemned. But should it happen that any one was invincibly ignorant, or had no means of discovering the truth, then we might reasonably hope that God would rather work a miracle in his favour than leave him in darkness. So it is that the Church refuses the imputation of intolerance.

But whence comes the ardent interest which skeptics are wont to take in infidels, and all those who are not enlightened by faith? How is it that, while affecting to pity *their* condemnation, they imprudently abuse the means of salvation which God has granted to themselves? Either their

complaints are unjust, and solely dictated by the hatred which they bear towards the Church, or otherwise they act as fools. "Why," let us say to them, with St. Paul, "why lose time in examining how God will deal with those nations who are not of the faith? Busy yourself rather in rooting up the evil which is in you, and which may destroy you forever. Rest assured that God will never condemn those who sincerely seek the truth in order to embrace it, as he will assuredly punish those with severity who have abused the lights and graces they received."—"Hail!" cries Mr. Moore, after hesitating several years in his choice of a religion, "Hail to thee, oh true Church! thou who alone leadest to life eternal, let my soul repose in the shade of thy branches!—Far from me the rashness to dive into the depths of thy mysteries, and the impiety to rail at their darkness!—Let the scoffer reason—I admire; let him dispute—I believe; I behold the height, but I sound not all the depth."

EXAMPLES.—The Princess Elizabeth Christina of Wolfenbuttel, thought it her duty, before she married Charles of Austria, afterwards the Emperor Charles VI., to consult the Lutherans, whose faith she had till then professed.—This she did in order to satisfy her own conscience. The Protestant doctors, assembled at Helmstadt, replied that, "As regards fundamental doctrine, the Catholics are not in error, so that salvation may be obtained in their communion."—"If that be so," said the princess, when she heard the decision, "there is no need to hesitate longer, and to-morrow I shall become a Catholic. In a matter of so great importance, the surest way is always the best to choose." Her father expressed himself of the same opinion, and he too became a Catholic. DE TREVERN.—*Final Discussion.*

Henry IV., solicited by his friends to embrace the Catholic faith, demanded of the bishops whether one could be saved in the Church of Rome; they, of course, replied that assuredly one could save his soul in the Church, and that, moreover, there was no salvation outside her pale. The monarch then addressed himself to the Protestant ministers,

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and asked them whether salvation was to be found in the reformed Churches as in that of Rome ; the ministers having answered that one could be saved in either, whereupon the king said : " The bishops assert that out of their Church there is no salvation ; you acknowledge that salvation is to be obtained in their communion : in that case, I must declare myself a Catholic. In an affair so important, the surest way is the best."

ARTICLE VI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

ALL the faithful who compose the Church Catholic are united together and form but one body, of which Jesus Christ is the head. The close connection existing between all the members of this body, establishes amongst them a community of spiritual goods, and this is what we understand by the *Communion of Saints*.

The faithful are called *saints*, because they have been sanctified by Baptism, and are all called to sanctity. The spiritual goods, which are common to the faithful, are the infinite graces which Our Lord has obtained for us by his sufferings, the merits of the Blessed Virgin and all saints, the Sacraments, the prayers, and all other good works which are done within the Church. Of all these spiritual gifts is formed a treasury which belongs to all the Church, each of the faithful having his share according to his dispositions. Those who are in the state of grace have a full participation in all the spiritual treasures of the Church.

This community of spiritual goods is the necessary consequence of the unity of the Church. All the members of a family labour for the advantage of the whole, and each has his own benefit in common with the others. So it is with the Church, whose members compose but one family and one compact body. St. Paul compares the Church to the human body ; and no similitude could give us a better idea of what is meant by the Communion of Saints. The body has several members, and each of these has its own peculiar function ; nevertheless, they all form but one and the same body. They have all the same head, the same

soul, the same life. The functions of each member, and their benefits are for the good of all the body; all concur to the same end, which is the preservation of the body; the eyes see, the ears hear, the hands act, the feet walk for the whole body; in a word, all the members conspire for the advantage of each other, and lend each other, in case of need, all possible assistance. So, in the Church, all the faithful, animated by the same spirit, living under the same head, are united amongst themselves in all their various actions. Each member prays, labours, and merits for all the body, and receives at the same time the price of the labours, virtues, and prayers of the entire Church. But in order to profit by these advantages, one must be a member of the Church; those who are separated from her by heresy, by schism, or apostacy, or those whom she has cast forth from her communion by excommunication, have no part in the spiritual advantages derived from the Communion of Saints.

In order to have a full share in these gifts and blessings, one must even be a *living* member of the Church, or in other words, one must be in the state of grace. Those sinners in whom the Holy Ghost does not abide by grace, are indeed, members of the Church, but they are dead members: how, therefore, can they pretend to the same advantages as those who are full of life? A dead arm, though it remain attached to the human body, can neither receive nourishment, increase, motion, nor action. Yet even sinners cease not to derive some profit from their union with the rest of the body; it is a great privilege to belong to that society in which alone are found truth, charity, justice, salvation, and the means of attaining it. A sinner is dead; it is true; but whilst he remains united to the body, he may revive by the prayers of the Church, which are incessantly offered up for his return to life by the way of sincere repentance.

The faithful of whom the Church is composed are divided into three branches: the Church *militant*, comprising all those who still wage war on earth against the enemies of salvation; the Church *Triumphant*, consisting of the blessed in heaven; and the Church *Suffering*, which is composed of the souls who are yet expiating their faults before they can enter Paradise.

Hence, the faithful on earth are not only united amongst themselves, but also with the Saints triumphing in heaven, and with the suffering souls in purgatory. We rejoice in the happiness of the Saints, we bless God for what he has done for them, and beg them to intercede with him for us; the Saints on their side, love us as their brethren, and assist us by their prayers. We offer our supplications to God on behalf of the souls in purgatory; we give alms, and perform other good works that he may relieve them in their sufferings, and in his mercy abridge their duration.

EXAMPLE.—St. Fructuosus, a bishop of the third century, prayed without ceasing for all the Church. When about to suffer martyrdom, being condemned to be burned alive for the Faith, a Christian took him by the hand and said, "I entreat thee to remember me before God?" The holy martyr replied, "I must remember all the Catholic Church, extended from east to west over the earth!"

St. Polycarp used to pray day and night for the whole Church Catholic, throughout all the world. LASAUSSE

CHAPTER XI.

I BELIEVE IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

It is only in the Catholic Church that remission of sins is found, God grants that favour only to those who become his children. It is through Baptism that Christians are first cleansed from original sin; but as it too frequently happens that the baptismal innocence is quickly lost, Jesus Christ has instituted a Sacrament for the remission of sin, committed after Baptism; this is the Sacrament of Penance. God is always disposed to forgive us, provided that we receive this Sacrament with sincere sorrow for our sins. There is no sin which cannot be effaced by this means. Should we even have committed the most grievous crimes, and were they more numerous than the hairs of our head, we can obtain their remission by the Sacrament of Penance.

It is not, however, through our own merits that pardon is granted to us, but through those of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The promise which God has made to forgive our sins is purely the effect of his mercy; and that promise is the sole resource of sinners and the motive of their confidence.

It is God alone who can forgive sin; hence, when the priest pronounces the sentence of absolution, it is God himself who effaces the sin by his ministry.

We cannot doubt that Jesus Christ has granted to his Church the power of remitting sin: "*Receive ye the Holy Ghost,*" said he to his Apostles; "whose sins ye forgive, they shall be forgiven; and whose sins ye retain, they shall be retained."

We should be more fully sensible of the value of this favour, if we could comprehend the misfortune of a person who, after having offended God, could never recover the grace he had lost, and who would be obliged ever to bear all the weight of his iniquity, while feeling himself hurried on by time towards the fatal term of his reprobation.

Great care must, nevertheless, be taken not to abuse the mercy of God, or presume upon it, in order to sin more freely. What! should we offend him because he is always ready to pardon us?—should we be wicked, because he is infinitely good?—Let us not deceive ourselves in this matter; that abuse of his mercy is the crime which of all others offends him most, and God who forgives all those who worthily approach him in the Sacrament of reconciliation, may not leave us time to have recourse to it. How many people have been cut off in their sins, and who has assured us that we shall not be taken short, as they were?

EXAMPLE.—A servant, returning from Catechism, was interrogated by his master on what he had learned; he answered with a sigh! "I have learned that I am damned."—"How is that?" inquired the master. "Because the Catechism says that one must have more sorrow for his sins than for the death of his father; and for my part, I have grieved far more for my father's death than ever I did for my sins." His master told him that perhaps he did not clearly

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understand what he had heard, and he proceeded to explain to him the doctrine of the Council of Trent concerning contrition, in the following manner: "Do you not perceive that the sorrow which we feel for having offended God, is of a nature entirely distinct from the grief arising from the death of a friend, or parent? The former is *a hatred and a detestation* of the sin committed: the latter is the effect of the natural tenderness which exists in the heart for a dear relation. Do *you* hate, do *you* detest sin? are you resolved rather to die than to sin again? If such are your sentiments, you have the necessary sorrow—you have, in short, true contrition." On hearing this, the worthy man began to breathe more freely, and sincerely thanked his master for having so far enlightened him, and drawn him from his error, which if permitted to continue might have ended in despair.

ABBE SALVATORI, *Reflections for Sinners.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY.

It is an article of faith, that our body shall one day rise again. All men shall die, and they shall arise again with the same bodies they had in this life. The body, laid in the earth, shall go through the process of corruption, and moulder into dust; but what changes soever it may have undergone, its ashes shall one day be gathered together and re-animated by the breath of God. Life is but a dream, and death a sleep; but the resurrection will be the beginning of a life which shall never end. There is no truth more clearly established in Holy Writ, nor more firmly maintained in all ages, than this of the Resurrection. It was believed, too, from the very beginning. "I know," said the holy man Job "that my Redeemer liveth, and will raise me up at the last day: and I shall be clothed again with my skin, and in my flesh I shall see my God; whom I myself shall see, and my eyes shall behold, and not another." But it is principally in the new Law that this truth is made clearly manifest. "The day will come," said Jesus Christ, "when all who are in the grave shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they who

have done good works, shall arise and live forever; but they who have done evil shall arise to be condemned."—"In a moment," says St. Paul, "in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of the last trumpet the dead shall arise to die no more." That resurrection shall be general; all shall arise, the great and the small, the just and the wicked, they who have lived before us from the beginning of the world, they who are now on the earth, they who shall come after us, all shall die, and rise again at the last day with the same bodies they had in this life. It is God who will work this prodigy by his Omnipotence. As he has drawn all things from nothing by his will alone, so shall he with as much ease, gather together our scattered members, and re-unite them with our souls. It is not more difficult for the Almighty to re-animate our bodies than it was for him to create them. Nay, we have under our eyes, every year, a figure of this resurrection. Are not the trees as it were, dead during the winter, and do they not appear to resuscitate in the spring? The grain and other seed which is cast into the earth, decays therein, only to come forth again fairer than at first; it is the same with our body; which, like unto a seed, is laid in the earth, for a season, to come forth again full of life. The bodies of the just shall not then be solid, heavy, and corruptible, as they now are; but they shall shine like the sun, and shall be free from all sorts of pain and inconvenience, full of strength and agility, such as was the body of Our Lord after his resurrection. The just, who are his children, sanctified by his grace, united and incorporated with him by Faith, shall arise like unto himself; Jesus Christ shall transform their mean and abject bodies, and shall render them conformable to his own—glorious and impassible. The body, which has had its share in the good done by the soul while they were joined together, shall participate also in its happiness. The wicked shall, indeed, rise again, but their bodies shall have none of these glorious qualities; they shall arise, but only to be given up to torments endless in their duration, and inconceivable in their greatness.

"All the multitude of those who sleep in the dust of the earth," says one of the Prophets, "shall awake, some for life eternal, and others for endless ignominy and disgrace."

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What a spectacle shall then meet our eyes! what sentiments will arise in our hearts, when we hear the sound of the trumpet, and when that dreadful voice shall echo over the earth, "Arise, ye dead! and come to judgment!"—when we shall see all mankind assemble, without any other distinction than that made by their own works!—St. Jerome, in the desert, continually fancied that he heard the last trumpet, and his soul was filled with terror. We have much more reason to fear than he had; how then can we rest satisfied? If the future resurrection of the body is a source of hope and consolation for the just, it is also an object of terror and dismay to the sinner.

EXAMPLE.—In the reign of Antiochus, the seven young Maccabees and their mother generously suffered the most cruel torments rather than violate the Law of God, because they hoped in the resurrection. The first had his tongue cut off, and the skin torn off his head, and he being still alive he was cast into a caldron over a huge fire. The second, when expiring, said to the king: "You now put us to death; but the Ruler of the world shall one day raise us up to life everlasting." The third said with confidence: "I have received these members from Heaven, but I now hold them as nothing in defence of the Laws of God, because I hope that they shall be one day restored to me." The fourth spoke in these terms: "It is better for us to be slain for obeying God, then to preserve our lives by disobeying him; we hope that in the resurrection, God will render glorious these bodies which we received from him." The others manifested similar courage and intrepidity. Nevertheless, the youngest still remained; and Antiochus tried to shake his purpose by caresses and the hope of reward; he also sent him to his mother, hoping that she would persuade him to sacrifice to the idols. But that generous mother said to her son; "Look up to heaven! raise thine eyes to God, who hath created all things, and thou shalt not fear these torments, but will follow thy brethren to death!" Antiochus, more than ever enraged, poured out all his wrath on the boy, and caused the mother to undergo the same torments as her sons.

CHAPTER XIII.

I BELIEVE IN LIFE EVERLASTING.

OUR soul, immortal in its nature, on quitting the body, passes from this life to another, from this visible world to a world invisible. The Pagans themselves believed in a future life, wherein man was to be punished or recompensed according to his works. The expectation of a future life is therefore the dogma of all mankind, and the faith of nature.

There is, then, another life to come after this, and that life shall never have an end. We shall be eternally happy or eternally miserable, according as God has found us just or wicked at the moment of our death; but as the soul may be stained with numerous trivial faults, which must exclude it from heaven for a time, yet do not make it deserving of hell, it follows that besides the paradise prepared for the just, and the hell destined for the wicked, there is still another place which is called *purgatory*, established temporarily to purify souls who are found guilty, at their departure from this world, of certain venial sins, or who otherwise have not satisfied the divine Justice for the penalty which remains after mortal sin has been remitted in the Sacrament of Penance.

EXAMPLE.—St. Bernard, quitting the paternal roof, to bury himself with his brethren in solitude, they were met by the young Nivard, their brother, to whom they said:—“Henceforward, regard our inheritance as thine own; we are going to enter religion.”—“That is to say,” replied the child, “that heaven shall be yours, and earth mine; assuredly our shares are far from being equal,” and he soon after followed their example.

GODESCARD.—*Life of St. Bernard.*

ARTICLE I.

ON PURGATORY.

IN order to go to heaven immediately after death, the soul must either have preserved its baptismal innocence, or

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recovered it by penance; for nothing defiled can enter heaven. But human weakness being so great, it is very difficult to preserve ourselves pure amid the contagion of the world, and to be found at the final moment entirely free from stain or imperfection; hence the necessity of a place of expiation for these lighter faults, as well as to supply the want of penance which should have been done for certain sins although remitted, as to their eternal punishment, by the Sacrament of Penance.

In the time of the old Law, this truth was perfectly well known, and all who were at all instructed in religious matters, knew that souls were purified from their venial faults by temporary punishments before they entered into Limbo, or that place of rest wherein they were to await the coming of Christ, who was to introduce them into heaven. The valiant Judas Maccabeus sent a sum of money to Jerusalem, for the purpose of having prayers and sacrifices offered up for his soldiers, slain in battle: "because," said he, "it is a good and salutary thing to pray for the dead, to the end that they may be delivered from their sins." But this truth has been more clearly defined by the decisions of the Church, founded on the very words of Jesus Christ, which establish a distinction between sins which *may* and may *not* be remitted either in this world or the other.

Although the Church has not decided with regard to the pains of purgatory, it is certain that they are in proportion to the greatness of the sins which remain to be expiated, and that, consequently, they must be very great; several of the fathers are even of opinion that they differ from the pains of hell only in the term of their duration, and the patience with which they are endured.

It is in our power to relieve the souls in purgatory, and we are even bound to do it, if we would conform to the spirit of the Church. They are of the elect, friends of Jesus Christ, and being destined to reign with him, they will be able to indemnify us a hundred-fold for the sacrifices we shall have made to relieve them or abridge their pains.—They are our neighbours, our relatives, our friends, our benefactors, who cry to us from the depth of their dungeons, beseeching us in piteous tones, "Have pity on me

—have pity on me; you, at least, who are my friends!" "My dear child!" cries a father, a mother, from amidst the purging flames, "we suffer inconceivable torments in this place of woe; take pity on those to whom you owe so many obligations,—even your life, and the wealth you possess; have compassion on our lamentations, and relieve us in our sufferings; you can easily do it: the assistance of the Holy Sacrifice, an alms, a prayer, the sacrifice of some pleasure or enjoyment, which you will make on our behalf, nay, the slightest voluntary privation, may have effect in delivering us from the torments we endure, and in procuring for us the glory of heaven!—Ah! can you be insensible to our misfortunes, and neglect us in the time of our necessity? Will you dare give yourselves up to joy while we are plunged in devouring flames?"

What! a stranger, even an enemy would excite our compassion if we saw him in so deplorable a state, and we could not refrain from stretching forth a hand to assist in drawing him from the fiery furnace. Well! in purgatory, there are parents, brothers, sisters, friends, forgotten and neglected by their own; how can we desert them thus?—These souls cannot satisfy the justice of God but by paying to the last farthing; they are as prisoners retained for debt in that place of torment; nevertheless, we can make satisfaction for them by prayer, fasting, alms-deeds, indulgences and communions, and particularly by having the Holy Sacrifice offered up on their behalf. Charity makes it a duty for us to relieve these faithful souls, commanding us to do unto others what we should wish to have done for ourselves. It is even our interest to fulfil this duty, for the souls whom we may have relieved will be sure to interest themselves for us in heaven, and that most efficaciously; they will become powerful protectors for us as regards both this world and the next. Even justice compels us to be mindful of the souls in purgatory; and that because some may be there retained either for having been too indulgent to us, in flattering our passions, or otherwise for having offended God on our account; it may be a father or mother who has committed some unjust act in order to enrich us; moreover, they may have enjoined us to give alms or make

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EXAMPLE.—St. Perpetua, St. Felicitas, and other servants of Christ, having been arrested for the faith, were confined in a close prison, where Perpetua was favoured with many visions. In the first of these, the Lord made known to her that she and her companions were all to suffer martyrdom; in the second, she saw one of her brothers, who had died some time before. It appeared to her that the boy suffered the most dreadful torments; that he was tortured with a devouring thirst, without ever being able to reach the edge of a basin or pond which he incessantly tried to accomplish. The Saint, perceiving by this vision that her young brother was in purgatory, commenced praying for him with his companions. Some days after, she saw her brother again, but this time he appeared clean and comfortable, refreshing himself, and roaming at will over the plain where the basin was. Thus did the Lord vouchsafe to show how efficacious are the prayers offered up for the departed.

ARTICLE II.

OF PARADISE.

PARADISE is the abode of the glory and magnificence of God, being the dwelling-place prepared by him for his angels, and also for men who live in his fear, and die in his love; but in order to make us understand how immense are its treasures, and how ineffable its joys, it would be necessary that one of the blessed souls should come down from heaven, and relate to us its wonders. "No," says St. Paul, "the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the glory that God hath prepared for his elect." Let us imagine, if we can, the transcendent joy of a soul entering into heaven!—Oh! what a moment is that, when the miseries of this life being for ever at an end, an eternity of happiness is commenced! With what delight, what satisfaction, what transport does it at length behold its God, and feel that its fate is for ever decided; its happiness secured!

What joy for a captive when he has recovered his liberty, and escaped from the hard yoke of slavery! what joy for a prisoner, long immured in the depths of a gloomy dungeon, when he again beholds the light of day! what joy for one who has been long tossed on the stormy ocean, amid tempests and quicksands, where his life was continually endangered, when he finds himself safe arrived in port!

Faint, imperfect image, any of these, of the joy, the consolation, the happiness of a soul which, after the long captivity, the protracted exile, and the lingering pains of this vale of tears, enters at length into the haven of safety, and the land of the living, there to dwell for ever, amongst the elect; to dwell with God himself, the Author of its being, the term of its desires, the centre of its repose, without any fear of again losing him—assured of possessing him for all eternity, and to be a partaker in his happiness!

But it is not enough to know the bliss of heaven, we must also try to merit it by the practice of good works. "Narrow is the way," says Jesus Christ, let us then try all we can to enter therein. However great may be our efforts to obtain that end, they are trifling when compared with what we seek.

What! should we not have courage to do ourselves a little violence, to deprive ourselves of some slight gratification, or to overcome human respect, in view of happiness so great! Where then is our faith! where our reason!—People every day make the sacrifice of their repose, and of their very health for the fleeting breath of honour; they labour all their lives to amass a little wealth, knowing, nevertheless, that they must give it up when dying; and yet they would do nothing for that heaven which is to be possessed and enjoyed for ever! "To secure an eternity of happiness," says St. Augustin, "an eternity of labour and toil would not be too much to give, and yet we will not give it even a moment." A short prayer, morning and evening, is considered too much; confession is a fearful task; the sanctification of the Sabbath is sacrificed to human respect; abstinence on Friday and Saturday, to sensuality; and our duties, to the love of pleasure! And yet we aspire to become the associates of the martyrs—the righteous

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—the heroes of religion! Heaven is a reward, which must be earned; it is a crown which must be won in the combat; it is a conquest which we can only make by violence; those who know how to conquer, are they by whom it is obtained. Heaven is the abode of sanctity, and its gates are only open to innocence or to perfect penance. If we busy ourselves solely with the vanities, goods, and pleasures of this life, we are neither innocent, nor repentant, and are, therefore, unworthy of being admitted into heaven. Ah! how consoling it is for the virtuous Christian to know that every thing he does for God shall be abundantly recompensed; that even a cup of cold water given in his name, or one aspiration of the heart to him, shall not go unrewarded!—With what constancy does he not endure the trials of this life! The losses, the disgraces which throw the wicked into despair, become for the just so many sources of merit by the resignation with which he receives them, and the hope of being indemnified for them in heaven, which he regards as his own country. Thither it is that he daily sends the treasure of his good works; it is for heaven that he labours, and for heaven that he adorns his soul.

If we only knew what the souls in heaven possess and enjoy, and how much they can there glorify Our Lord, we would not only labour with assiduity in the work of salvation, but we would also endeavour to procure for others the same advantage, and more especially our own friends and relatives; that would be the truest and best way of proving our love for them. We can do nothing more advantageous to our neighbours or more glorious to God. "He," says St. Chrysostom, "who macerates his body by all possible austerities has less merit than he who gains a soul for God; it is something greater to save one's brethren than to work miracles." It was this zeal for the salvation of souls which has induced so many apostolical men to quit country, and parents, and friends, and go, at the risk of their lives, into lands beyond the seas, in order to convert Pagans, and baptise their children in danger of death! "He," says St. John, "who gaineth his brother to God, shall save his soul and cover the multitude of his sins."

EXAMPLE.—M. Boursoul had exercised at Rennes for upwards of forty years, the functions of the sacred ministry, and underwent, even to the very close of his career, without relaxation, or interruption, the fatigue of the pulpit, and the painful task of presiding at the tribunal of penance. He wished to die, he said, with his arms in hand: "Ah! if I were only worthy of obtaining that favour from my God! I every day beg of him to terminate my life, either while I am announcing his gospel in the chair of truth, or exercising in the sacred tribunal the office of his mercy and justice!"

A prayer like that, dictated by ardent and heroic charity, deserved to be heard and granted. On Easter Sunday, the 4th of April, 1774, M. Boursoul said mass at five o'clock, and immediately repaired to his confessional. About two o'clock in the afternoon he proceeded to All Saints, a parish of Rennes, where, notwithstanding his great age and numerous infirmities he had that year preached the Lent. At three o'clock he ascended the pulpit to preach on the glory and happiness of the Saints. His delivery had in it all the vigour and impetuosity of youth; his voice was unusually low and distinct; his motions were so rapid, and his gestures so animated, that his meaning was understood almost before he had given it utterance. Towards the close of the first part, after the liveliest and most touching description of the beauties of Paradise, and the joy of the blessed in heaven, he made a fresh effort, and exclaimed: "No, my brethren! it will never be given to the weak eye of mortal here below to gaze upon the splendour of the divine Majesty;" then lowering his voice, "It is in heaven that we shall see him face to face, unveiled before us." These words were spoken in a deep, penetrating tone, and he repeated them again in Latin; *Videbimus eum sicuti est.* Just as he finished these words, he bowed down his head on the side of the pulpit, and expired. The church was even unusually crowded, and the consternation was sudden and general: some cried out aloud, and others shed tears; some fainted away, and others said aloud, "He is a Saint, he died speaking of the happiness of heaven." A child who was present was heard to say: "He was speaking of paradise and he has gone there!"

CARRON, *Life of Boursoul.*

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ARTICLE III.

OF HELL.

THERE is a hell, that is to say, a place of torment where the wicked shall be eternally punished with the demons. This truth, like all the others of our creed, has been revealed by God. Jesus Christ speaks, in the Gospel, of a fiery furnace, a place of torment where there shall be nought but weeping and gnashing of teeth. They who doubt whether there is a hell, and, under that pretext, follow the course of their disorderly passions, are blinded or corrupt; they risk the penalty of an eternity of torment for the pleasure of a single moment.

The pains of hell are of two sorts, that of *loss*, and that of the senses. The pain of loss consists in the privation of the sight and presence of God, whereas that of the senses consists of the most violent torments suffered without the slightest alleviation. The Sacred Scriptures depicts these tortures in the most energetic terms: "*The fire shall consume the reprobate,*" says the Holy Ghost, "*the worm which gnaws them shall never die, and the fire which devours them shall never be extinguished.*" That fire, as though it were conscious, according to the expression of St. Augustin, "will attach itself to the corporal members which have served as the instruments of sin, and also to the intellectual faculties, preying incessantly on all without ever destroying them."

All the damned are deprived of the presence of God, and they suffer, moreover, the most fearful torments, always proportioned to the number and magnitude of their crimes.

It is, therefore, an article of faith that the reprobate shall for ever endure the most cruel torments both of body and soul, plunged in total despair, and without any sort of consolation.

The pains of hell shall be everlasting; a belief which is founded on the Scripture itself. Isaiah tells us that the worm which gnaweth the damned shall never die, and that the fire which consumes them shall never be quenched. "The reprobate" it is said in St. Matthew "shall go to a place of everlasting torment."

But, it may be said that God is too merciful to punish for an eternity a single mortal sin which was perhaps but of a moment's duration. The answer is that the mercy of God is not, cannot be opposed to his justice, which latter requires that a man who dies impenitent should be eternally punished; for, in the first place, the sin of that man is in some measure eternal, according to his present disposition, since he chooses to die in sin which merits consequently an eternity of punishment; 2nd, mortal sin combats and destroys, as far as it is able, an eternal and infinite good, it ought therefore to be punished with an eternal and infinite torment, at least eternal in its duration, seeing that man being finite is not capable of sustaining a torment that is in its nature infinite; 3rd, human justice sometimes punishes a crime that was short in its duration, with a punishment that is eternal as far as the life of man is concerned, such as perpetual exile, which implies that were the exile to live for ever he would be for ever banished from his country. Why, then, should not the divine justice banish forever from the celestial mansions a sinner who necessarily shuts himself out from heaven by wilfully dying in a state of final impenitence?

Young people, be not deceived, but from this moment take the firm resolution of avoiding sin which would inevitably lead you to perdition; do not expose yourselves to so dreadful a misfortune: rather make the sacrifice of all worldly interests; if you save your soul, all is gained; if you lose it, all will be indeed lost, for you, even had you gained the entire universe while here on earth!

EXAMPLES.—Some young libertines, finding themselves in company with a monk of a very austere order, began to rally him on his way of living, and at last said to him: "Ah father! you will be well caught if there is, after all, no heaven."—"You will be still worse taken in," returned the monk, "if there is a hell, as religion teaches us."

The Gospel relates that the rich man being in hell, and seeing Abraham in glory, addressed him in these words; "Father Abraham! have pity on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am

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suffering in these flames the most cruel torments!"—"My son," said Abraham, "remember that thou hadst good things during thy life, and Lazarus, on the contrary, fared but poorly. now he is in joy, and thou in torment."

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIANITY, AND THE SIGN OF THE CROSS.

To make profession of our faith is one of our most essential duties, for Jesus Christ will not recognize as his disciples those who have been ashamed of belonging to him, and shrunk from declaring their faith openly.

One of the best means of showing that we are Christians, glorying in that title, is to make religiously upon ourselves the august sign of the cross.

There are two ways of making the sign of the cross: the first is by making with the thumb a cross on the forehead, mouth, and bosom; it is thus that the priest makes it during the Mass when he begins to read the Gospels, and all the faithful should do the same.

We make the sign of the cross on our forehead, to show that we are Christians, and not ashamed to act as such; on the mouth, to testify that we are ever ready to make profession of believing in God and in Jesus Christ; and on the breast, to show that we love the cross of Christ, and heartily believe what we profess.

The second method of making the sign of the cross is by placing the right hand on the forehead, then on the chest, then on the left shoulder, and afterwards on the right, saying! "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

When making the sign of the cross we profess the unity of God by saying these words *in the name*, in the singular number; the Trinity of persons, by naming each in turn; the mystery of the Incarnation and that of the Redemption by making the form of the cross on which the Son of God made man, died for us; and the mystery of grace, by car

rying the hand from the left side, which is the figure of sin, to the right, which represents the grace merited for us by Christ.

The words "In the name of the Father," signify again: "I am going to perform this action by order of the Most Holy Trinity; I will obey it faithfully, and accomplish its will; I do this in honour of the Blessed Trinity, desiring to render it all the homage of which I am capable. I am about to perform this action with the assistance of the Most Holy Trinity; acknowledging that I can do nothing without the strength which comes from the Father, the grace which the Son has merited for me, and the light which proceeds from the Holy Ghost.

We should not fail to make the sign of the cross at least morning and evening, before and after meals, at the beginning and end of our prayers, and when setting about any important action; it is a great means of drawing down upon ourselves and upon our undertakings the blessing of God. We should also make it, at least on our heart, when we find ourselves exposed to danger or temptation, to the end that we may be delivered therefrom, and preserved from offending God.

EXAMPLE.—A young girl blushed while making the sign of the cross on an occasion when it is usual to make it, and that because a stranger was present. This was noticed by a certain pious person, who soon made her ashamed of her cowardice, and want of love for Jesus Christ: "What!" said he, "Jesus was not ashamed to die on the cross to redeem you, yet you blush to form on yourself the august sign of your redemption!" He added, "I hope that in future you will glory in belonging to your adorable Master. May the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost bless you, through the passion and death of Our Lord Jesus Christ!"

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SECOND TREATISE.

ON THE LOVE OF GOD AND OUR NEIGHBOUR.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE COMMANDMENTS IN GENERAL.

God had from the beginning of the world engraved his Law on the heart of man; but, as the impression became fainter as time passed away, he resolved to publish it before the multitude of the Hebrews, whom he had chosen to be his own peculiar people. For that purpose, fifty days after their going forth from Egypt he called to the top of Mount Sinai, Moses, whom he had appointed as their chief, and made known to him his design of contracting with his people an everlasting covenant.

Moses, having then assembled the chiefs of the nation, announced to them the orders which he had received from the Lord, and commanded that they should make them known to the people. The Hebrews, when they had learned what was the will of God, replied with acclamation: "We shall do whatsoever the Lord commands us to do." On the third day after, the mountain was covered with a thick cloud; there was lightning and thunder, and a great noise, like that of a number of trumpets, which filled the air around. The people being struck with terror, hid themselves in their tents; but Moses compelled them to advance as far as the boundary line which God had ordered him to make around the foot of the mountain. Then, from the midst of the cloud, was heard the voice of God, distinctly pronouncing the ten commandments: "*I am the Lord thy God, &c., &c.*"

These ten commandments were afterwards written on two tables of stone. Thus it was that the Lord, having made known the right which he had to command us, manifested his will, and commanded that it should be observed.

This law is for us, as well as for the Israelites; it is the natural law, the law of all society; it comprises the duty of all men, and is the standard of comparison which will decide their eternal fate.

The three first precepts of the Decalogue point out our duty towards God, and the seven others, that which we owe to our neighbour; hence the love of God and our neighbour is the abridgment of the Law.

EXAMPLE.—A venerable old man, seeing a number of children pressing around him, said to them these memorable words, which they never could forget: "My little children, when we see with what strictness monarchs must have their laws observed, it ought to remind us that God will not permit *His* laws to be violated with impunity. So I have always remarked, 1st., that they who do not fear God are almost invariably miserable; 2nd., that work done on Sunday has never made any one the richer; 3rd., that ill-gotten wealth has never profited the possessor; 4th., that giving alms has never made any one the poorer; 5th., that morning and evening prayer has never retarded any work; and 6th., that a rebellious and disorderly child has never been a happy or a fortunate one." *Petit Souvenir*

CHAPTER II.

OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

I am the Lord, thy God, &c.

THIS first commandment ordains: 1st., that we should believe in God; 2nd., hope in him; 3rd., love him with all our heart; 4th., adore but him alone.

ARTICLE I.

OF FAITH.

FAITH is a supernatural and theological virtue, by which we believe all the *truths* that the Church teaches, because that God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, has revealed them.

These truths are contained in the sacred Scripture and in tradition. What we call the Holy Scriptures are the books which have been written by the inspiration of the

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Holy Ghost: that is to say, the Old and New Testaments. By tradition is meant the word of God, which, without having been penned down by those to whom it was revealed, has nevertheless come down to us by vocal transmission from the Apostles and their successors. It is to the Church that the deposit of Scripture and tradition has been confided; it is she who determines its true signification, and proposes it to the faithful by an infallible judgment and with supreme authority. God has given her that power, and he has promised to preserve her from all error, and to be with her in her teaching, even to the end of the world. We ought, therefore, to believe all that the Church teaches, and there is no salvation for him who has not faith. "He who believes and is baptised shall be saved," says Jesus Christ, "and he who believeth not shall be condemned."

Faith is then indispensably necessary in order to be justified and to be saved. Faith does honour to God, rendering homage to Him as the supreme truth; it is, as St. Paul says, a sacrifice, and an offering which we make to Him, by submitting our mind to his infallible word, and silencing all our objections, our prejudice and repugnance, in order to believe, without any shadow of doubt, on the authority of that divine word, that which is not perceptible to our senses, and which our minds cannot comprehend.

We should frequently make acts of faith on the truths of our holy religion, in order to testify to God our submission to his revealed word.

That submission, which we owe to the word of God and to the teaching of the Church, is so much the more reasonable, that we every day believe, on the testimony of men, things which we have never seen, and others which we cannot comprehend, although they may strike our senses.

Is not the testimony of God, who can neither be deceived nor deceive us, more worthy of belief than that of man, or even than the evidence of our own senses, and of our mind, whose faculties are in themselves so limited?

Nothing, then, is more rational than to believe, on the word of God, things which we do not understand; in that case we believe, not because we comprehend, but because God has said it: faith is founded on the word of God, and

not on our own intelligence. We could never know the mysteries of faith but by revelation: God has revealed them, and he has, moreover, established an infallible authority to propose them to us. As he calls all men to the knowledge of the truth, he has also provided means of ascertaining it, means which place it within the reach of all. To be a Christian we only require to be docile, and our docility needs not to be a blind and stupid credulity, but an enlightened submission, founded on motives the strongest, and the most capable of convincing a rational mind. Public facts, and shining miracles are incontestible proofs which establish the truth of religion.

"Jesus Christ," says St. Augustin, "has demanded faith of men, but before he demanded it he had earned it by his miracles." Of this proof, he himself reminded the Jews, saying to them: "The things which I do in my Father's name render testimony of me; if I do not the works of my Father believe me not; but if I do them, even though ye believe not in me, believe in my works." Miracles are then the voice of God, and no one can, without impiety, reject a doctrine confirmed by miracles; for it would be an impious absurdity to say that God had displayed his almighty power to authorize a falsehood.

We must, then, believe all the truths that the Church teaches, since to reject even one article would be to lose the faith.

It is to sin against faith if we voluntarily doubt any of the truths which it teaches, and we expose ourselves to such sin when we have the temerity to read impious or heretical books, for "he who loveth the danger shall perish therein." We also sin against faith when, through human fear, we deny it with our mouth, although the belief may still exist in the heart: the martyrs chose rather to suffer all sorts of torments, and even death itself, rather than dissemble their faith before tyrants. Finally, we sin against faith when we neglect to seek instruction on those truths whose knowledge is necessary to salvation. It is through this negligence that many Christians live in ignorance of that which they ought to know, and thus commit many sins which they do not even perceive.

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Faith is of several kinds: namely, human or natural faith, whereby we believe on the testimony of men; divine or supernatural faith, whereby we believe on the word of God; lively or practical faith, which is accompanied by charity and good works; dead or theoretical faith, which bears no such fruit; infused faith, which we receive in baptism; acquired faith, which is the abundance of divine understanding which we obtain by the practice of virtue; implicit faith, which makes us believe generally all the truths which the Church teaches; and explicit faith, by which we ought to believe certain truths distinctly, such as the Mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption; the four ends of man; what relates to the Commandments, the Sacraments, Prayer, &c.

EXAMPLE.—In a certain company where, Providence had so ordained it, that an ecclesiastic was present, several young persons were playing the skeptic, and retailing with infinite relish the tirades of J. J. Rousseau against the divinity of Christ: "Gentlemen!" said the ecclesiastic, "you do not now believe, but the day will come when you shall; if not in time, it will be in eternity. You shall then believe as the devils do; they believe, and yet are tormented!"

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ARTICLE II.

ON HOPE.

HOPE is a supernatural and theological virtue by which we expect with a firm confidence in the goodness of God, all the blessings which he has promised us.

How great they are, these blessings!—and how precious! Nothing less than the eternal possession of God himself; that happiness is infinitely above ourselves and our efforts, hence it is by his own pure mercy alone that he has promised it to us. Of ourselves we are not able to merit such happiness; but God, who loves us notwithstanding our misery and our unworthiness, engages to bestow upon us the graces necessary to obtain it: he has given us his only Son, to the end that whoever believes in him may not perish, but have life eternal. The sight of our miseries should not then pre-

vent us from hoping in God, and looking for the possession of the promised blessings. His Almighty power, to which nothing is impossible: his mercy which is infinite; the merits of Jesus Christ which are inexhaustible; the virtue of his grace, his promises, and his having commanded us to hope in Him; these are the foundations of the Christian's hope. After such and so many assurances it would be an insult offered to God not to hope in him. As God will have us believe when he speaks, so also he will have us confide in him when he promises; hence, our confidence ought to be absolute and unchanging. No, Christian hope is not wavering or uncertain: it is a firm confidence, founded on an immovable basis. St. Paul compares it to a firm and secure anchor which holds the vessel fast amid waves and tempests. This hope is never disappointed when it is humble, sincere, and persevering, for God never breaks his promise. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word remaineth for ever. We are then assured that if we do not want confidence in God, he will grant us all that he has promised.

Christian hope is combatted by two opposite vices: despair on the one side, and presumption on the other. We sin against Hope when we despair of salvation; such was the sin of Cain, who, having killed his brother, said: "My iniquity is too great to be forgiven." Despair is a sin the most horrible in the sight of God, because it outrages his goodness, the one of all his perfections which he most loves to manifest to men, and to which he desires that we should render homage by an unbounded confidence.

"A mother may abandon her child; but I will never abandon those who put their trust in me," says the Lord "Though your sins were red as scarlet, and your soul black as coal, I will never cast you off when you seek me with contrition and confidence." There is no sin which our Lord has not expiated by his death, and for which he has not merited pardon. He ever cries aloud that his blood was shed for us. That good Father requires only that his child may return to him; our repentance revives all his tenderness; but, on our side, let us never abuse his patience and his kindness, in order to offend him with more freedom, and to persevere in our wickedness.

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We also sin against Hope when presuming on the mercy of God, or relying on our own strength, we postpone our conversion; such is the sin of those who, forming for themselves a false idea of the mercy of God, believe that they may save their souls without ceasing to offend him; or who, counting on a long life, persuade themselves that it will suffice to think of the business of salvation when the season of youth shall have passed away. Beware of saying: "The mercy of God is great; He will forgive me the multitude of my sins." How many have been deceived by that false confidence! They reckoned on the future, and lo! there was to be no future for them. Let us shun that illusion; let us not defer giving ourselves to God, for we know not what will be the duration of our life. May not death surprise us at any moment? It is true that one sinner was converted at his last moment, but it was a miracle operated at the death of Jesus Christ, and woe to him whose salvation depends on a miracle!

Again, we sin against Hope when we lack submission to the guidance of Providence in the affairs of this world, believing ourselves unhappy when we sustain losses, or afflictions, murmuring against God, or wishing ourselves dead, which is in itself a grievous crime. And how can we thus want confidence in so good a Father, who assures us that the very hairs of our heads are numbered, and that one of them cannot fall without his permission?

All that happens to us in this world is for our greater good, and may merit for us eternal happiness; let us well understand that health, riches, and other wordly advantages may be injurious to our salvation, and that it is good to suffer a privation of any of them when God wills it so; let us also be persuaded that nothing is yet lost for us whilst it is still permitted us to hope for heaven.

In order to increase and enliven our Hope, we should often make acts thereof, especially when we find ourselves exposed to any trial.

EXAMPLE.—God permitted St. Francis of Sales to be visited by a very painful temptation. When he was finishing his studies in Paris, being then but sixteen years of age, the enemy of salvation suggested to his imagination that

he was of the number of the reprobate. This temptation, made such an impression on his mind, that he lost his rest, and could neither eat nor drink; his whole frame withered away, and he every day became weaker and weaker. His preceptor seeing him fall away so, and perceiving that he ceased to take pleasure in any thing, repeatedly inquired as to the cause of so remarkable a change; but the devil, who had filled his mind with this illusion, was one of those who are called *dumb*, because of the silence in which they keep those whom they torment.

He saw himself at the same time bereft of all the sweetness of divine love. The blissful calm which he had enjoyed before that storm came on, now arose before his mental vision and redoubled his unhappiness. "It was then in vain," said he to himself, "that heavenly hope nourished me with the expectation of being one day replenished with the delights of the house of God, and immersed in the ocean of his pleasures! Oh lovely tabernacles of the heavenly courts! shall I then never see you?"

He remained an entire month in this anguish and bitterness of heart, which was like unto the pangs of death, or the greatest torment that can be endured in this world.—His days were spent in sighing and groaning, and by night he watered his couch with his tears. At last having, by a divine inspiration, entered the Church of St. Stephen to invoke the mercy of God on account of his miserable condition, and throwing himself on his knees before an image of the Blessed Virgin, he besought that Mother of Mercy to be his advocate with God, and to obtain from his goodness that "if he was so unhappy as to be destined to hate him for all eternity, he might at least love him during his life with all his heart."

A prayer so far removed from the sentiments of a reprobate was instantly granted: the shades which had gathered over his mind were suddenly dispelled, and he was restored to his wonted joy and peace.

ARTICLE III.

ON CHARITY.

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which we love God above all things ; because he is infinitely good and infinitely amiable ; and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God. " This is the first and greatest commandment," says Jesus Christ.

But was it necessary that God should command us to love him ? Is he not, of himself, supremely amiable ; do not his infinite perfections, his goodness to us, the favours with which he loads us, the advantages which we find in attaching ourselves to him—do they not all engage us to love him ? He has created us ; he preserves and supports us ; he has formed heaven and earth and all creatures for our use ; does not all that oblige us to love him ? God has done for us even more than all that in the order of salvation ; he has given us his own Son. He sacrificed him for our redemption ; he has admitted us to the number of his children ; every day, and every moment he sustains us by his grace ; he intends for us, when this life is past, an eternal felicity in the mansions of glory : how, after all that, can we refuse him our love ? What ! is it necessary to prove to a child that he ought to love his father ? Is not that sentiment inherent in the heart of man ? Nay, do we not cherish, with inexpressible tenderness, even the memory of a father ? And is not God, then, our father ? Is there any parent so deserving of that name as he, or was there ever a better father ? Add to all this the sweets which we enjoy in the exercise of this holy love. Oh ! what pure and perfect joy—what soothing consolation does it not diffuse through the heart wherein it lives and burns ? No, all the pleasures which this world has to offer are not to be compared to that delicious peace which God infuses into the soul that loves him. Let us, then, attach ourselves to God, and let us hasten to give him up our heart before sin has rendered it unworthy of being presented to him ! We cannot be happy but in loving him, and the more we love him, the happier we shall be

Yes, God alone can constitute our happiness : a man to whom God is wanting is unhappy, even in the midst of riches, glory and pleasure ; he desires every thing, and is never content. But he who loves God finds in that holy love consolations which make up to him for all the rest.—

His desires are satisfied, his heart is tranquil, and nothing can trouble the calm of his soul: even in poverty, he is rich; in humiliation he is great; in sufferings, he is overwhelmed with joy. We should, therefore, love God with all our heart; he is our first beginning and our last end. That great Master will have it that we give him our whole heart; he must be preferred before all creatures; we must be disposed to lose all rather than his grace, and to love nothing but through and for him.

It is to sin against this commandment to make a supreme good of any thing else but God, as the ambitious do of honours, the miser of riches, the voluptuous of sensual pleasures. The love of God must also be active: "If any one loveth me," says our Lord, "he will keep my Commandments." In fact, we desire to please those whom we love; and the means of pleasing them is to do their will, to accomplish faithfully all that they require of us, and often to perform some act which proves the sincerity of that love—we ought also to prove it by works, for the love of God cannot be idle; it is a fire which never ceases to burn, for if it once fail to animate the heart, then it is indeed extinct.

But it is not loving God enough, merely to observe the first commandment; we must also love our neighbour, that is to say, we must wish for him and procure for him, if possible, the same good as we would wish for ourselves: "For," says Jesus Christ, "these two loves cannot be separated," and he wills that this should be the mark by which his disciples are known. He who loves not his neighbour, therefore, is no longer a disciple of Jesus Christ; he has renounced his Gospel and his promises. Thus, in the happy days of the early Christians, there was seen to reign amongst the faithful the most intimate union and the most tender charity, so that they had but one heart and one soul. "Behold!" said the Pagans themselves, "how they love each other!" St. Paul reduced all our duties to our neighbour to that single precept; and, in fact, if we really love our neighbour, we shall be very unlikely to do any thing in his regard that is forbidden by the other commandments; we will not speak injuriously of or to him: we will not offer him any violence; we will do him no wrong; we

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will not deceive him; but will on the contrary do him all the good we can.

But we must not imagine that the word *neighbour* signifies those only with whom we have some tie of kindred or of friendship: "If you love," says Our Lord, "only those who love you, what do you in that? The Pagans do as much." By our neighbour we are then to understand all men, because they have all the same Creator and the same origin; because they all compose but one single family, of whom God is the father; because they are all created for the same end, which is eternal felicity; and have all been purchased at the same price, which is the blood of Jesus Christ, who died for all men. This love ought, therefore, to embrace even our enemies, on which head the precept is most distinct and formal. "I say unto you: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, pray for those who persecute and revile you; return good for evil, that you may be like unto your heavenly Father, who maketh his sun to shine on the just and the unjust." Beware of saying that it suffices not to wish ill to those who hate us; and that to love them, to have care for them, to render them service, is impossible. No, with grace, it is not impossible; and God gives that grace to those who ask it of him. God commands it, and he commands nothing impossible; but it is his will that we should do all we can, with the strength which he has given us, and that we should ask him for what we require over and above.

We show that we love our neighbour when we exercise towards him the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The spiritual works of mercy are, to bring back to virtue those who are wandering away from her paths, to instruct the ignorant, to give good advice to those who stand in need of it, to console the afflicted, to pardon injuries, to bear them with patience, and to pray for the living and the dead. The corporal works of mercy are, to give food to the hungry, to clothe the naked, to ransom prisoners, to visit the sick and those who are in prison, to harbour strangers, and to bury the dead.

EXAMPLES.—The Apostle St. Paul may be proposed as al

excellent model of the perfect love of Christ, who, having destined him for a great work and to suffer much, had given to him a great mind, great courage and great charity. "The charity of Christ presseth us," says he in one of his epistles, "considering that he died for all; that they also who live may not now live to themselves but to him who died for them, and rose again." "I live" says he again, "but it is no more I who live, but Jesus Christ who liveth in me. What then, shall separate us from the love of Jesus Christ? Shall it be affliction, or poverty, or hunger, or nakedness, perils or persecutions, the sword or violence? Amid all these evils we remain victorious because of Him who hath loved us; for I am assured that neither death, nor life, nor powers, nor any thing created shall ever separate us from the love of God in Jesus Christ Our Lord. If any one love not Our Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema."

St. Paulinus, expended considerable wealth (even to impoverishing himself), in relieving the necessities of the poor, and having no longer any thing to give, he sold himself for a slave, in order to procure freedom for the son of a poor widow who had come to implore his charity. St. Gregory the Great, who mentions this fact in his Dialogues, adds that St. Paulinus worked as a slave in a garden, until his master having discovered his merit, set him at liberty and sent him home again.

GODESCARD, vol. v. page 445.

ARTICLE IV.

ON ADORATION.

THE fourth duty which is comprised in the first commandment, is that of adoring God, or rendering to him that homage and worship which we owe to him, as the Sovereign Lord of all things. There are three distinct sorts of worship, that of Latria which is due to God, that of Hyperdulia which we owe to the Blessed Virgin, and that of Dulia which we pay to the Saints.

Adoration is a profound humiliation of the soul before the Supreme Majesty; before Him who by his word created hea-

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ven and earth, at whose glance the nations melt away like wax; under whose steps the mountains bend respectfully; before that God who sends thunder and tempest as the ministers of his wrath, and chains them down again when it seems good to him in his mercy. On beholding the greatness of God, the adoring soul humbles itself, is confounded, and as it were annihilated in his presence; it humbly acknowledges its dependence and its servitude; it praises and blesses the holy name of God; it returns thanks for all the mercies and favours it has received from him, beseeching him for all that it still requires, and which it only expects from his bounty; finally, it offers, and consecrates itself to him without reserve, to accomplish in all things, his holy will.

These internal sentiments display themselves in the exterior by corresponding actions, such as genuflections, prayers, the offering of our actions, and above all by the sacrifice of the Mass, which is, of all acts of adoration, the most excellent and the most august. We should, then, render to God every day, particularly morning and evening, the tribute of praise and adoration which he requires from us. It is by that religious exercise that we should begin and end the day. Let us never fail to acquit ourselves of a duty so important and so essential; let our first thought, the first movement of the heart be to Him who has created us, who still preserves us, and who every day bestows new favours upon us. Let our first action be to prostrate ourselves before the Sovereign Majesty, to adore him, to thank him for his blessings, to devote ourselves to his service, and to ask of him those graces of which we stand in need. Before and after each meal, let us also adore that tender Father, who opens his bountiful hand, and replenishes his children with every blessing; never let a false shame prevent us from fulfilling this imperative duty. Does a child blush to testify his gratitude for every new proof of his father's tenderness?—At the end of the day, we ought to renew the homage which we offered in the morning to our God. Let us then humble ourselves in his presence for the faults we may have committed; let us ask his pardon for them, and thank him for the graces which he has vouchsafed to grant us. Let us

remember notwithstanding, that the formula of prayers and other exterior acts of piety are but the body of religion; the interior sentiment of adoration being the soul thereof. Without this disposition of the heart, words and all exterior acts must fail in pleasing God, and would but draw upon us that reproach which he formerly addressed to the Jewish people: "This people honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Adoration belongs to God alone. We, indeed, honour the Saints, and venerate them, but we do not adore them. We pay not to them that supreme worship which is only due to God; we honour them solely as his friends and servants. It is good and useful to invoke them that we may obtain from God, through their intercession, those graces of which we stand in need; but it is from God alone we ask them, in the name of Jesus Christ, their Saviour and ours, who alone has merited them for us by his sufferings and death. We also honour their relics, as the precious remains of a body which was the Temple of the Holy Ghost, and is to rise again in glory, and in that, we do but follow the practice of all ages. We also honour their images, but that honour refers solely to the object represented: we recognise in them no other virtue than that of recalling to our minds the memory of their originals. Thus, in kneeling before the image of Jesus Christ, the Blessed Virgin, or any other Saint, it is not the image of Christ, but Christ himself that we adore; it is not the image of the Virgin, or of a Saint that we honour, but whoever it is meant to represent, and of whose virtues it serves to remind us.

The use of images is exceedingly beneficial, for it recalls to our minds the examples of the Saints, their struggles, their victories, and the glory they enjoy in heaven.

Men sin against the adoration due to God by *idolatry*, by *superstition*, and by *irreverence*.

Idolatry consists in paying to creatures the worship due to God alone, like the Pagans, who rendered divine honours to men, statues, animals, the stars, the vegetables in their gardens, nay, even to the vices themselves!—Although this gross idolatry no longer exists amongst us, yet irreligion and impiety have taken its place. There are fools in the

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world who say: "There is no God," and they adore none; or rather, as the Apostle says: "They make unto themselves other divinities; their pride, the love of riches and pleasures, impurity, gluttony, &c. become their gods."—There is yet another species of idolatry which is abominable in the sight of God, and it consists in lavishing sacrilegious incense on those idols of flesh who take the place of the Deity in a depraved heart.

We sin by *superstition* when we make use, in the divine worship, of certain practices not authorized by the Church, or in putting our trust in words or deeds of which she does not approve, and pretending to obtain particular ends by their means, such as a knowledge of the future, of hidden things, &c.—taking note of *lucky* and *unlucky* days, &c.—all these being only fit to draw down the malediction of God on those who practise or have recourse to them.

We sin by *irreverence* in profaning churches, the relics of Saints, their images, holy water and other such things, and still more by the sacrilege committed in receiving the Sacraments without the necessary dispositions. It is also a sacrilege to purloin any sacred thing belonging to the Church, or to strike a person consecrated to God, &c.

EXAMPLES.—Constantius Chloris, a wise and humane prince, esteemed and protected Christianity. Nevertheless he sometimes practised dissimulation, and publicly declared that all the Christians of his palace must offer sacrifice to Jupiter and the other Pagan divinities, if they would retain their offices and his favour. Some there were, who, preferring their fortune to their eternal interest, hastened to obey this order, which, however, was only meant to try them.—The result was that they only obtained the contempt of the sovereign, who, indignant at their baseness, banished them for ever, from about his person. One of his confidants having inquired the reason of this conduct, which surprised him not a little, Constantius gave him this wise answer: "Men who sacrifice their religion to their interest are likely to fail in every one of their duties; I have no reason to expect that they whose disgrace surprises you so much, would be more faithful to me than they have been to

their God." Not content with having chastised and humbled the apostates, the prince thought it also his duty to give a public reward to those Christians who, soaring above all temporal views, had persevered in the open profession of Christianity; and, in order to convince his courtiers that he reckoned only on the fidelity of those who were faithful to their religion, he confided to these generous and incorruptible Christians the guard of his person and of his States.

The Emperor Constantine Copronymus raised up a violent persecution against the faithful, for the veneration of sacred images. He summoned a holy hermit, named Stephen, and asked him in an ironical tone whether he still persisted in his idolatry, as he chose to call the honour which Catholics pay to those images: "Who is so ignorant," replied the Saint, "as to adore stones, gold or silver, simply because they represent Jesus Christ or the Saints? Our veneration only regards the originals of these pictures." Then drawing from his bosom a piece of coin, having on it the emperor's image, he demanded of those who were present whether he would be punished if he threw it on the ground and trampled it under foot, having on it the image of the monarch: they answered "Yes." "Oh infatuated men!" resumed St. Stephen, "ye would punish with death him who would trample on the image of an earthly king, who is but a mortal like yourselves, yet ye would dare to trample under foot the likeness of Jesus Christ, the King of kings!——"

Ecclesiastical History.

ARTICLE V.

ON THE RESPECT DUE TO CHURCHES

THE Church is the house of God; he fills it with his glory and his presence; it is the place where he resides in a peculiar manner, and which is specially consecrated to his worship: it is there where the faithful assemble to pray, to sing his praises, and to celebrate the Sacred Mysteries; and it is there that Jesus Christ dwells in the body, and offers himself to his Father for us. Is any thing more want-

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ing to inspire us with the most profound respect, and the most serious attention? Should we not, on entering that holy place, be seized with fear, and exclaim, with a Patriarch of old: "How dreadful is this place! it is indeed the house of God, and the gate of heaven!" Yes, temples are as it were, a new heaven wherein God abides with men. Is not He who dwells in that august tabernacle the self-same God whom the blessed adore in heaven? Like them, then, we ought to be annihilated in spirit and in heart before the divine majesty: it is veiled in our temples, I grant you; but is it any the less worthy of our profound adoration? How can we, then, dare to enter a church without respect; how can we dare remain there without recollection, without modesty, and sometimes even behave with the most scandalous levity.

All in that holy place speaks to us of the mercies of God: the sacred font, where with the life of grace we have received the inestimable right of a celestial inheritance; those tribunals of reconciliation, where we have been so often purified from our sins and cured of our spiritual wounds; that cross whereon Christ, Our Saviour, died for us; the altar, in fine, whereon he daily immolates himself, in order to apply to us the fruit of his sufferings; there it is, also, that we have participated at the Table of the Lord, and received in confirmation the unction of the Holy Ghost. Should not objects so touching fill our minds with holy thoughts and our hearts with pious sentiments, and should they not make us love to linger in a place so highly-favoured? How does it happen, then, that so many go there but with reluctance, and while there feel only disgust, being occupied solely with vain fancies, even if no worse? Do not all those mementos of the goodness of God speak directly to the heart? How outrageous it is to return such boundless love with cold, culpable indifference.

EXAMPLE.—The Turks have so great a respect for their mosques, that they never pass before them without some exterior act of reverence: a horseman would be punished severely if he did not alight from his horse in passing a mosque; they never enter them but with bare feet, and

hands joined together, and with all possible recollection. While in their mosque, they are so attentive and so devout that they would pass for monks rather than barbarians; they several times prostrate themselves on the ground, to humble themselves in the presence of God. During the whole time of prayer not one is ever seen to turn his head aside. It is a crime to speak to another, so that it is a thing unheard of to see two Turks converse at the time of prayer. If any thing is said to a Mussulman while he is at prayer, he makes no reply; he may be beaten, and he will not even look to see who struck him. Ah! but these infidels will one day put to shame those Christians who pray with so little modesty or attention!

What a lesson for Christians who are even well instructed in their religious duties!

Book of Travels.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT OF GOD.

Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.

THE second commandment forbids us all swearing injurious to God and the Saints.

It is as though the Lord said to us: Revere my holy name; I forbid you to profane it by employing it to authorize falsehood, injustice, or even to confirm truth without a sufficient reason.

To swear, is to take God or some Saint to witness what we say, or what we promise.

Swearing may be either an act of religion or a sin, according to the circumstances and dispositions by which it is accompanied.

When it is an act of religion, it must be done with *truth, justice, and judgment.*

Without *truth*, the oath is false, and becomes perjury; without *justice*, the oath is an unjust one; and without *judgment*, that is to say, when taken with levity, or without sufficient cause, it is rash and indiscreet.

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true and just, is a sin, and may become considerable, according to circumstances, and because of the scandal it may give. We ought never to take an oath without an important reason, and never through passion.

False, or unjust oaths or perjury, may be greater or lesser sins, according to the degree of malice with which they are made, and the scandal they may occasion.

There is a species of oath which is called *promissory*; being used to make more certain the execution of what is promised.

He who swears to do any thing, which he has no intention of doing commits a grievous sin, and is, in fact, guilty of perjury.

With regard to the fulfilment of what one has sworn to do, there are three circumstances wherein the oath is not binding: these are, 1st, when the thing promised is evil in itself and forbidden to be done, for God cannot require the performance of an act which is sinful in its nature; 2nd, when a thing which was practicable when promised, becomes impracticable, by unforeseen events; 3rd, and finally, when the oath was not taken voluntarily, but was forced upon us; nevertheless, on such an occasion it is necessary to have recourse to the Ecclesiastical authority, lest one might err in giving judgment in his own case. If the thing promised, or ratified with an oath, be in itself possible and lawful, it should certainly be executed, for then the non-fulfilment of the promise is an enormous sin.

Swearing, without necessity, is very often criminal, at all times useless, and even dangerous, since we expose ourselves to contract a habit of it, which may lead in the end to perjury.

There are three ways of designating swearing; *blasphemy*, *imprecation*, and *disguised swearing*.

Blasphemy is a word, or a discourse injurious to God, his Saints, or Religion.

It is blasphemy to attribute to God defects which do not, or could not belong to him, such as taxing him with partiality, injustice, or the like.

It is blaspheming God to deny to him that which is his due, such as pretending that He disdains to take care of his

creatures, that He takes no notice of the affairs of this world, &c.

It is blasphemy against God to speak with contempt of his divine attributes, perfections, &c.

It is blasphemy of the worst kind to speak disrespectfully of God, even though it be through custom, and the sin is still greater if the blasphemy is spoken in anger, passion, or through contempt.

It is blaspheming God to join to his adorable name certain terms which dishonour him; such, for example, as *sacred*, which becomes in that case, a sort of malediction against God.

It is blasphemy against the Saints, to mock them, to attribute to them defects or failings, to find fault with the honours rendered to them by the Church, &c.

It is blaspheming Religion, to turn it into ridicule, to blame its practices, to speak ill of the Sacred Scriptures, &c., &c.

Then there are also blasphemies of mind and heart; these are thoughts and desires contrary to the divine perfections or to things which concern religion; such is the blasphemy of *the fool who said in his heart "There is no God."* This is a horrible, an execrable sin, and deserving of the most terrible punishment.

Blasphemers are no longer stoned to death, nor are their tongues pierced; but let them not triumph the more of that, for the time of chastisement will soon come, when they, wretches that they are, shall receive the punishment due to such crimes.

Imprecations are expressions by which we wish harm to befall ourselves or others, such as *death, damnation, &c., &c.*, whether in promising, denying, or assuring of any thing.

Disguised oaths are of two sorts: 1st., some of them are oaths with some change of terms; 2nd., others are oaths or curses disguised under words which, though not exactly pronouncing the real oath, relate to it in some way or another, such as, "On my conscience,"—"As I am before God," &c., &c.

Christians should never express themselves so, nor permit such habits of speech to grow upon them.

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It is not cursing, to call any one by injurious names, but it is outraging that person, and exposing him to offend God, which is never, in any case, allowable.

Neither is it swearing or cursing to give utterance to immodest words or phrases which virtuous people take care never to express, but it is *speaking obscenely*, which is bad, and often gives scandal.

By an oath, we secure or promise something to our fellow men, by bringing in the name of God ; but it sometimes happens that people make promises to God himself, to perform things which they know are pleasing to him. Such a promise made to God is called a *vow*.

A vow is a deliberate promise made to God, to do a thing which may be supposed agreeable to him : they who promise to give an alms, to make a pilgrimage, &c., are said to make a vow.

A vow is something more than a simple resolution. By a vow we bind ourselves towards God to do the thing promised, under pain of committing sin.

The obligation of performing what we have promised to God rests on the circumstances, indicated, on place, time, &c.

The Church has it in her power to dispense with a promise made to God ; but this power she never exercises without the strongest reasons.

EXAMPLE.—A boy who had been carefully taught by virtuous masters, gave, some years ago, a most touching proof of his faith. He had delayed, it seemed, some time after school was over, and got home a little later, whereupon his father began to scold him, swearing, moreover, by the holy name of God. The poor lad, shocked at himself for having given occasion for such blasphemy, threw himself on his knees, and burst into tears : “ Father ! ” he cried, “ Oh ! father ! beat me if you will, but do not swear, I implore you ! ” The father was confounded, seeing the boy’s horror of the crime he had committed, and he failed not to profit by the lesson, so as never again to utter a blasphemy. Ah from how many sins might children, if they were true Christians, save their parents !

Essay on Blasphemy.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Remember to keep holy the Sabbath Day.

EVERY day belongs to God, and there is none which we are not bound to dedicate to his glory; but as the wants of life prevent us from giving ourselves up entirely to the exercises of religion, God has reserved to himself a certain day of the week, which he commands us to employ in adoring and serving him. This precept is as old as the world. God, immediately after he had created the world, consecrated that day, to the end that men might celebrate the memory of the creation and the mysterious repose into which he entered after having finished that great work.—That day whereon God rested was, in the Old Law, the seventh day, and was called the Sabbath, which signifies *rest*; but in the New dispensation it is the first day of the week, which is called Sunday, or the Lord's Day. That day has been substituted for Saturday, from the time of the Apostles, and by divine inspiration, in memory of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: because it is the day on which Our Lord, after the labours of his mortal life, entered upon his eternal repose. It is then intended to honour that God, victorious over death, by whom we have been redeemed.

"Six days shalt thou labour," says the Lord, "but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; on that day thou shalt do no work, neither thyself, nor thy son, nor thy servant, nor the stranger who is within thy gates!" The Jews were so strict in the observance of the Sabbath, that they prepared on the previous evening even the food which they required for the morrow. The law of the Gospel is less rigorous, and permits all works of charity or of necessity, together with those which are called *liberal*, such as reading, writing, drawing, &c.; but we are not allowed to do any servile work, that is to say, the work or labour whereby we earn our living, nor any thing that might tend to turn us away from the service of God. It is, therefore, a great sin to busy ourselves on that day with any mercenary affairs, unless obliged by actual necessity, or requir-

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ed for the divine service, public necessity, or the indispensable wants of life.

Tradesmen who work on that day, under pretence of finishing a job, or for fear of losing a customer, commit a great sin. But it would be even a greater sin to give one's self up to profane dissipation, or to indulge in criminal amusements, such as balls, plays, &c., which, instead of sanctifying, would profane the Sabbath. Actions which are at all times prohibited, are doubly so on days consecrated to the Lord. Of all servile works are there any more opposed to the sanctification of those days than the works of sin, which render us slaves of the devil? Does not sin, which is always a great evil, even when committed on any ordinary day, appear doubly hideous when committed on Sunday? Does not such conduct announce an utter forgetfulness of God, and a more marked contempt of his holy Law?

It is not enough to abstain from servile work and from criminal actions, we must also employ the Sunday in the service of God, by applying ourselves to acts of piety and devotion; this is, in fact, the essential purpose of the precept. If God commands us to suspend our ordinary labours, it is that we may have nothing to withdraw us from attending to his service. Would God be at all honoured by listless idleness? or would the day be sanctified if it were passed in gambling, at table, or in visiting? No, certainly not: that which really sanctifies the day which the Lord hath set apart for himself, is assisting at the divine offices, and public instructions; in reading pious and useful books, or by employing ourselves in any good work tending to the service of God, our own sanctification, or the relief of our neighbour. It is true that God does not forbid us a little recreation, provided it be innocent and taken in moderation. Some relaxation is necessary, and is perfectly allowable; but it should never be contrary to piety, and should never be suffered to encroach on the time allotted to prayer, to singing the praises of God, or to our own instruction. Would it be sanctifying the day to give to God but a small portion of it?—The Church, indeed, prescribes to us assisting at Mass as the principal part of the day's sanctification;

but she does not make that sufficient, as we see clearly by the series of prayers and instructions which she has fixed at various hours throughout the day.

EXAMPLES.—Under the old dispensation, the profanation of the Sabbath was punished with death; for not only did God command that a man who was found picking up wood in the desert on the Sabbath should be stoned to death, but he said again to Moses, "Speak to the Children of Israel, and say unto them: Observe my Sabbath, because it must be kept holy; he who violates it shall suffer death; if any one labour on the Sabbath, he shall be cut off from the midst of you; six days shall ye labour, but the seventh is the Sabbath, the day of rest, consecrated to the Lord; whosoever shall do any work on that day shall be put to death."

Exodus, xxxi.

One Sunday, Father C——, being in one of the Marian Islands, was passing along on the sea-shore, on his way to visit a sick person. He saw some Indians, who had been baptised, working very busily at some boats they were making, and asked them if there were not other days in the week to do such work, or how it came that they were thus transgressing the divine precept which commands the keeping holy the Lord's Day, by abstaining from all servile work, and employing it in the practices and exercises of Christian piety. They savagely answered that such was their will and pleasure. The priest went on his way; but in a few hours after, when returning from his visit, he passed by the same place, and found the boats and the shed wherein they had been, all reduced to ashes. The Indians who had paid so little attention to his remonstrances were now covered with confusion, and profuse in their expressions of lively and sincere repentance.

Edifying Letters.

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CHAPTER V.

OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

*Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may
be long in the land.*

God, by his fourth Commandment prescribes the duties of inferiors towards their superiors, and of superiors towards their inferiors; for, by the word *father* and *mother*, we are to understand all those who have any authority, and right of command.

Children have four principal duties to fulfil towards their father and mother; they must respect, love, and obey them, and assist them in all their wants.

The first duty of children towards their parents is respect—inviolable respect—at all times and in every situation. That respect consists in receiving with docility their advice and their correction, in always speaking to them in a respectful tone, in fearing to displease them, and in concealing and excusing their faults. A father and mother are to their children the representatives of God, whose place they hold with regard to them. They are the depositaries of his authority, and to treat them with any disrespect is to despise God himself, since the insult offered to them, refers also to Him whom they represent. Thus, in the Old Law, God had decreed that such an offence should be punished with death! "If any one," said He, "revileth his father or his mother, let him be put to death."

The second duty of children is to love their parents. Can it be necessary to prove this obligation?—Does it not suffice to remind any child with ordinary feeling of all that his parents have done and still do for him? They have given him life; since he came into the world they have taken care of him, and during his infancy, when he required continual attention, they were, as it were, entirely occupied with him: they watched over his childhood, and thought no task too great—no service too troublesome, when his welfare required it. What trouble does not a father and mother take for their child?—How hard they work in order to earn a living for him! A child who does not love his parents cannot be a

Christian; he cannot even be human—he must be a monster.

The third duty of a child towards his parents is obedience. “Children,” says the Apostle St. Paul, “obey your parents, for that is just before God.” This is the mark by which it may be known whether you respect and love them sincerely; a child who disobeys his father or mother, or who obeys them with reluctance, has for them neither the love nor respect which he owes them.

Finally, the fourth duty of Children towards their parents, is to assist them in all their necessities: for instance, in sickness, in old age, and poverty; on all these occasions a child is obliged to assist them as far as he possibly can. This obligation cannot but be felt by any one who has a heart. We ought, in reality, to find a sensible pleasure in paying back to a father or a mother even a portion of what we have received from them, and to fail in performing that duty would be a monstrous piece of ingratitude,—stifling, as it were, all the feelings of nature. Hence the Holy Scripture denounces those who render themselves guilty of so heinous a crime! “How infamous is he who deserteth his father, and cursed of God is he who grieveth his mother, by refusing to take care of her.” But if a child ought to succour his parents in their temporal wants, how much more strongly is he bound to procure for them the spiritual assistance which they may require, especially in their old age or in their last illness. Many parents will owe their eternal happiness to the dutiful attention of their children in having them receive the Sacraments before their death.

Children are also bound faithfully to execute the last will of their parents, and to pray and have others pray for them after their death.

Fathers and mothers owe four things to their Children: food, instruction, correction, and good example.

They are bound to feed, clothe, and bring them up according to their condition, and to give them a trade if needful, or otherwise to procure for them a suitable employment or means of living.

It is also their duty either to teach them, or have others teach them, the principal mysteries of Faith, the Command-

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ments of God and the Church, and the prayers which they should recite every day; and when their children are about to enter upon any state of life, parents should consult God, in order to know whether they are called thereto, and also to make known to them the duties of that state.

They are obliged to correct them, that is to say, to reprove them when they have committed any fault; but they must do it with mildness and charity, not with passion and anger.

Fathers and mothers are bound to watch over themselves, in order that they may always give good example to their children, and never do wrong in their presence; let them be well assured that many parents will be condemned for having been the cause of their children's sin; for not having brought them up in a Christian manner, or for having given them bad example.

To this commandment may also be referred what St. Paul wrote to the Romans: "Let every one," said he, "be submissive to the higher powers; for there is none which cometh not from God. The prince is the minister of God for good; we must, therefore, submit ourselves to him, not through fear of chastisement, but by duty of conscience. Render tribute to whom tribute, honour to whom honour."

It is then binding on us to obey the laws of those who are in power, in all that is not opposed to the divine precepts.

Such was the doctrine of the Apostles and the conduct of the primitive Christians, although they lived under barbarous and idolatrous princes, who slaughtered an innumerable multitude of martyrs.

Sovereigns are men, and may have their faults: but we must overlook them, and observe with regard to them in an especial manner the laws of the Gospel relating to charity.

To give into the depths of their intentions, and to regard their actions unfavourably, is great rashness, and a sort of usurpation on the rights of God, whose place they hold.

The Prince of the Apostles commands the faithful to be obedient not only to sovereigns, but also to those who hold authority under them, and to the magistrates who are their representatives. If rulers are bound to regard as their chil-

dren those whom they rule, the governed are also bound to respect them as their fathers.

This same commandment ordains for all the faithful, ~~the~~ submission to their ecclesiastical superiors. The Pope is the vicar of Jesus Christ; the diocesan bishop, the successor of the Apostles; a priest is the spiritual father of his parishioners; and a confessor is the visible guide to lead to heaven those who confide in him; every Catholic priest is the minister of Jesus Christ, for the administration of the Sacraments and the remission of sins. We should, therefore, on every occasion treat them with that love, respect, and obedience due to their sacred character, and the functions they are charged to exercise on the part of God. It is to all the ministers of his Church that Christ says: "He who heareth you, heareth me; and he who despiseth you, despiseth me!"

Masters who are charged with bringing up children have the first claim to their respect, after their fathers and mothers. Their office is to instruct their pupils in religion and human learning; to watch over their conduct, and to form their hearts and minds. They, on their side, are bound to have a paternal care over their pupils, and to fulfil all their duties to them.

Pupils, on the other side, owe to their teachers respect, love, docility, and gratitude. A master consecrates his time, his attention, and his health, to the forming of his pupils in knowledge, arts, and in virtue; he sacrifices to them his liberty, reducing himself to a sort of slavery; he endures with patience the weariness and tedium of listening for ever to the same sounds. What claims has he not on their affections while he thus makes so many sacrifices for them, that they may reap the advantage? His counsels are salutary, even necessary to them, to enable them to avoid the dangers to which passion exposes them; his advice is as a restraining bridle, which arrests them in their evil course, and holds them back from the verge of the precipices which surround them on every side. His reprimands, if reasonable and moderate, should in no ways lessen their love for him. He reproves them, it is true, but it is because he desires their improvement; if he loved them less,

he would always be deep make.

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he would not be so much interested in their welfare. It is always with regret that he uses severity, and his tenderness is deeply hurt by the reproaches which they oblige him to make.

We sometimes see in the world men who have been most carefully educated, with but little profit to themselves; they are found unable to fulfil the duties of any employment or situation, and commit a multitude of faults through ignorance. If you would learn the cause of this disorder, interrogate those who knew them in their youth; you will hear that they were rebellious spirits, full of themselves, and determined never to submit to authority; they would not listen to advice, and would suffer no reprimand; they thought themselves at liberty to treat their masters just as they liked, and took pleasure in magnifying even their most trifling faults; they never overlooked or excused any failing of theirs, and amused themselves in speaking ill of them, and in prejudicing others against them. What is the consequence?—They themselves have grown up in ignorance and full of faults; they have become men, but useless and contemptible men; in a word, they are bad citizens, purely because in the days of their youth they were disobedient and refractory pupils. Young people, you do not now feel, it may be, all the obligations you owe to those who instruct you, nor the importance of what they are doing for you; but a day will come when you shall know the value of a good education, and how much you are and ought to be indebted to them. The advantage of education is beyond all price, and the trifling remuneration made to your teachers can in no way be compared to the benefits you receive from their tuition. The benefits remain with you during your whole life: the gratitude of the pupil to his master should, therefore, know no bounds.

EXAMPLES.—M. Delleglaie was conveyed to Paris from a dungeon in Lyons, and his daughter accompanied him, for she would not consent to leave him. She begged of the driver that she might be admitted into the same carriage with her father, but this favour she could not obtain. But can filial love be thwarted by trifling obstacles?—No!—Al-

though she was of a feeble constitution, she set out on foot, and followed, for more than an hundred leagues, the carriage which contained her father. She never quitted it for a moment except when she entered a house at every town they passed through, in order to prepare food for her father and every night she borrowed a coverlit to enable him to sleep somewhat more comfortably in the cell wherein he was lodged.

Thus she followed him on, league after league, watching over all his wants, until he arrived in Paris, when she was forbidden to wait upon him. But she was well accustomed to bend, by her prayers, the iron resolution of her father's persecutors, and she did not despair on the present occasion; she persevered in her efforts, and after three months' prayers and supplications, she even obtained the deliverance of the author of her life. ABBE CARRON.—*On Education.*

A certain father had an unfortunate son, who frequently reviled and abused him. It happened that the father had been himself deficient in the respect due to his parents; but he ceased not to bewail that grievous sin of his youth, and as often as he received from his son any fresh insult, he offered up to God the anguish it caused him, entreating him to have mercy on him, and forgive him his own bad treatment of his father. One day, when the wretched son struck him to the ground and trampled upon him, he cried out: "You are revenged, my father! you are now revenged—truly I deserve all this. Lord! have mercy upon me!"

L'ASUSSE.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not kill.

By this commandment God forbids any one, on his own private authority, to take away the life of another, or yet his own. This crime is an outrage on the sovereign power of God, who alone is the absolute master of man's life—to

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Him alone it belongs to take away that life, which he alone has been able to give. It is the greatest injustice that can be rendered to any man, to deprive him of that which he holds dearest and most precious. One is guilty of murder, not only when he himself commits the action, but also when he is accessory to it, either by commanding, advising, or in any way assisting the actual transgressor.

The law of God does not merely forbid murder, but it also forbids anger, contempt of our neighbour, abuse and violence. It is Jesus Christ himself who stretches the meaning of the precept thus far, wishing us to stifle in our hearts all emotions of anger, and all desire of revenge; and denouncing all the effects of those feelings, such as abusive words, bad treatment, all these being in themselves a species of homicide, and may lead to it, if not promptly repressed; hence it is that St. John pronounces him who hates his brother a murderer in his heart. Must we not think that they who either propose or accept a challenge to fight a duel, are exceedingly culpable in the sight of God?—What madness it is to steep one's hands in the blood of a brother for the very slightest insult—for a word—a jest—and to sacrifice to a false point of honour his own eternal salvation and that of his neighbour! The Greeks and Romans, pagans as they were, never knew or practised a custom so barbarous. They were ambitious of obtaining glory, but they knew better than we do, in what true glory consists; they understood it to lie in shedding their blood for their country, and in drawing their sword against the foreign enemy, not against their own fellow-citizens. Duelling is then a crime as opposed to humanity as to Christianity—as contrary to reason as to religion.

It is not a less crime to destroy one's own life. Life is a deposit which God has confided to us, and it is his will that we should preserve it with care until he is pleased to demand it again; to dispose of it without his order, and in defiance of his prohibition, is to usurp his prerogative—He being the sole arbiter of life. What renders this crime doubly horrible is that it can have no remedy, since it deprives the wretched perpetrator of any chance of repentance, and casts him headlong into the regions of eternal woe. What

madness it is then to shun a passing care or sorrow, by rushing wilfully into the frightful and never ending torments of hell!

But God does not content himself with forbidding us to destroy the life of the body, he also prohibits all that may injure the soul, and especially *scandal*, which destroys the spiritual life of our neighbour. Scandal consists either in disposing others to sin, or in turning them away from virtue. It is a second species of homicide, which although it does not strike our senses, is none the less real in the eyes of faith, nor less criminal in the sight of God. Hence Jesus Christ pronounced the most terrible menaces against those who give scandal to their brethren or are to them the cause of sin. "Woe!" said he "to those by whom scandal cometh!—whosoever scandalizeth one of these little ones, it were better for him that he were cast into the sea." We may judge of the enormity of this sin by the horror with which Jesus Christ would have us regard it.

When we consider the effects of scandal, we shall at once recognize the justice of the terrible punishment reserved for it by God. What is it that the scandalous sinner does? He stands up against the will of God, which is that all men should be saved. "The will of thy heavenly Father" says Jesus Christ, "is that none of these little ones perish:" He has adopted them all as his children, and wishes that all may be saved; but by scandal an obstacle is thrown in the way of God's holy will, since those whom He would have to be eternally happy, are thereby led into sin, and danger of eternal death. The scandalous sinner annuls the benefits of the Redemption. Jesus Christ came into the world to save souls; and shed his blood to redeem them; by scandal he is deprived of these souls that have cost him so dear—he is robbed of his rightful conquest, and his blood was shed for nought—and lastly, those souls whom he had destined for eternal felicity—a felicity which he had purchased for them—are exposed to infinite and endless misery.

Suppose a young man to have virtuous inclinations; docile to his parents and teachers, collected when at prayer, and attentive to all his duties, he was a pleasing object in the sight of God. But he had the misfortune to get into

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company with a libertine who gloried in having no piety—no religion—who gave to virtue an odious and ridiculous name, and mocked those who professed to observe its precepts. Our young man being moved by his discourse, begins to fear his scoffing and censure, and learns to be ashamed of virtue. The libertine goes farther: he converses in his presence, on infamous and improper subjects; he gives him bad advice, which he supports by his own example. The youth learns the evil which he knew not before; he receives the most fatal impressions, and at length falls into the same evil courses pursued by the other. Behold him, thenceforward, the slave of the same passions, addicted to the same vices. God would have saved that soul, for which Jesus Christ died, but the scandalous sinner causes its destruction. That soul was destined to have enjoyed the presence of God for all eternity, and the scandalous sinner drags it down into everlasting misery. What punishment has he not a right to expect? or is there any torment too great to be inflicted upon him? Wretch that he is, he would shrink with horror from steeping his hands in a brother's blood, yet the evil he does him is infinitely more horrible. It would be far less cruel for him to plunge a poignard into his bosom, and thereby destroy the life of his body. That soul by him seduced, shall cry out vengeance against him for all eternity, and its cries shall be heard by the Sovereign Judge. Woe then, to him who teaches youth the evil which they knew not before! woe to him who seduces innocence either by counsel or example! woe to him who turns others away from virtue and piety by senseless raillery! woe to him who gives or lends books contrary to religion or morality! woe, in fine, to him who causes scandal, of whatsoever sort it be, or who, being able to prevent scandal, fails to do so with all his might! he is guilty of all the sin of which he is the cause, and he shall be punished for all the evil that may arise, even after his death, by reason of the scandal which he has given.

EXAMPLES.—Adonibesech, having been conquered by the Israelites, they cut off the extremities of his hands and feet. Then that barbarous king, recalling the cruelties which he

had himself inflicted on others, said: "Seventy kings whose feet and hands I have caused to be cut off, eat under my table the crumbs that fell therefrom; the Lord is now doing unto me, what I did unto others.

Judges, 1.

Some years ago, a youth named Gustavus, who had scarcely attained his sixteenth year, was found dead in his chamber, having put an end to his own existence. The unhappy boy had become disgusted with the world, though barely entering on its career. What could have led him to commit that rash act—that fearful crime? it was incredulity—unbelief. From the age of fifteen he had been what is called a free-thinker. His father had said: "when my son has passed the age of childhood, I will have him choose his religion and his God. The time for the choice was come, and the unfortunate youth chose for himself *death*—Oh unhappy son! unhappy father!

A certain student possessed in a high degree every virtue that might adorn a young man; by a misfortune too common to youth, he fell into the company of a scoundrel, who, given up himself to the most shameful passions, speedily kindled in that heart, lately so pure, the guilty flame which devoured his own, so that he soon became a confirmed libertine. In vain did his sorrowing friends beseech him to return to the paths of virtue—he would not heed them. But God spoke to him in his turn. The unhappy young man awoke one night in dreadful pain, and uttering the most fearful cries; his friends crowded around, doing all they could to calm him, and a priest was brought who exhorted him to return to God. The dying youth could only look at him with a wild stare, and cry out in a piteous voice these doleful words: "woe to him who seduced me!—In vain would I invoke the assistance of God, for I see hell open to receive me." And turning himself on his bed, he expired in the most frightful despair.

COLLET, Virtuous Scholar.

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CHAPTER VII.

OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

By the Sixth Commandment God prohibits every thing that is contrary to the purity of the soul and of the body, which sins are regarded in Scripture as most abominable; and St. Paul, comparing to idolaters, those who give themselves up to the vice of impurity, says that neither one nor the other shall ever enter the kingdom of heaven.

It is then forbidden by this Commandment to say or do any thing contrary to public decency, or against purity: hence it is before God a heinous sin to speak obscene words or to sing lascivious songs, or even to hear such with pleasure; to read books, to write letters, or to give advice tending to impurity; to fix the eye on immodest pictures or statues to be indiscreet in one's looks, or commit any act, either on one's self or another, that may please or gratify any irregular or disorderly inclination. There is no vice more opposed to the sanctity of God, and none that he punishes more severely than that of impurity. He has frequently avenged himself, even in this world, on those who committed it, as we see from many examples recorded in the scriptures. This sin shall be punished even in infidels who know not God, because it is contrary to the reason which enlightens them, because that in giving way to it man degrades himself, for that, being in his own nature elevated above the other animals, he thereby brings himself down to their level. It is, however, still more enormous in Christians, who have been regenerated in Christ Jesus, seeing that nothing can be more contrary to their vocation, for it is a gross outrage offered to the Holy Ghost whose temple it profanes, and to Jesus Christ whose members it defiles. What a crime it is to desecrate the temple of God! What a sacrilege to dishonour the members of Jesus Christ! The bare idea ought to fill us with horror; but our detestation of that hideous sin will be fully confirmed if we only consider for a moment its fatal consequences. It destroys the health, it dissipates wealth, dishonours families, and covers with in-

family those who are so unhappy as to give way to it. A libertine eventually becomes the disgrace of his family, and his name a by-word for a whole town, and he either perishes miserably in the prime of life, or drags out a wearisome existence in ignominy, in pain, and in despair.

The effects of this sin are still more fatal in regard to the soul; it extinguishes the light of the mind, and renders it incapable of serious application. A young man who is addicted to this shameful vice can think of nothing solid: his passion follows him every where and will permit him to think of nothing else; every kind of work is wearisome, and tedious, and irritating to him. The heart is still more diseased than the mind, and he has an almost unconquerable disgust for prayer and every other exercise of piety; he is, in fact, that carnal man of whom St. Paul speaks, who conceives nothing of the things of God; even the sight of good people is offensive to him, because their conduct is a sort of silent censure on his own scandalous crimes. "He who doeth evil" says Jesus Christ, "hates the light,"—he never draweth near to it lest his works might be condemned. He quickly becomes callous; for there is no vice which casts a deeper darkness on the soul; the dearest interests touch him, or concern him no more; the threats and promises of God are alike despised; eternal happiness or eternal misery is no longer thought of: all is sacrificed, all goes for nothing. He forgets both what he owes to others and to himself; it is no longer reason that guides him, for he is carried away by a blind and impetuous inclination; he becomes a spectacle for all the world, yet he sees not himself. He even loses his faith, for religion cannot ally herself with a dissolute life. In order to stifle remorse of conscience and live tranquilly in crime, he begins by doubting the most certain truths, and ends by dismissing all belief. There follows final impenitence; he dies in his sin, and appears before the tribunal of God covered with the guilt of an entire life, according to that saying of Scripture: "The disorders of youth shall penetrate even his bones, they shall go down with him into the grave, and thence into hell."

We are not only obliged to avoid this abominable sin, but also every occasion that may lead to it, for *he who loveth the*

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danger shall perish therein, says the Holy Ghost. The occasions which lead the oftenest to the sin of impurity are, 1st, excess in eating and drinking, because it brutalizes the soul, renders it carnal and sensual, deprives it of all idea of God, and keeps it, as it were, bent down to the earth.

2nd, Luxury in dress, which becoming to one's self and others a cause of sin and of scandal, is always the sign that chastity is dead or dying in the soul.

3rd, Idleness, for to live without doing any thing is to expose one's self to continual temptation; idleness being the mother of every vice.

4th, Bad company, since nothing is more pernicious than the society of libertines who have lost the fear of God and all sense of natural modesty, and who induce others to commit sin, either by their discourse or example. The Holy Ghost warns us in several parts of the Sacred Scriptures to shun the company of the wicked and to break off all connexion with them. "If the wicked will draw you to them," says he to all, "heed them not. If they say to you; *Come with us*, beware of following them; if you keep their company you shall soon become like unto them." Being thus instructed by Truth itself that vice is contagious,—that the wicked impart their infection to all who approach them,—that by associating with them we soon learn to think, speak, and act as they do, we should sin grievously by exposing ourselves to so great a danger—the danger of resembling them. Should you like to live with infected persons?—Doubtless you would not; fearing least you might speedily catch their disease. Bad companions are the plague of the soul. Even as they who are inwardly decayed communicate by their breath the corruption of their body, so do sinners communicate by their conversation the corruption of their heart and soul; for of what do such persons speak most commonly?—What is the ordinary subject of their discourse, when they find themselves without restraint? Alas! they talk of every thing that can flatter the passions; every bit of scandal that they have seen or heard, they relate with the utmost satisfaction,—they will not blush to enlarge on the most shameful topics, and even make a merit of their very crimes,—nay, they will sometimes go so far

as to boast of some which they have never committed. Modesty is by them turned into ridicule, and piety is an object of contempt and derision. To what imminent danger does not all this expose a young man who is still virtuous, if he does not immediately withdraw from such pernicious company! The poison of sin enters his heart: at first he is restrained by a false shame, and has not courage to reprove those who are offending God, or oppose the evil they are committing; he is afraid of displeasing them, or of being mocked and derided if he do not as they do; then by degrees he becomes familiar with that which before would have made him shudder; he gives himself up to the same disorders, and ends by being ashamed of his former modesty.

5th, The reading of bad books, which fills the mind with a thousand dangerous thoughts, and the imagination with a crowd of indecent phantoms, thence the poison passes into the heart, and produces ruin and death. One bad book is sufficient to corrupt a multitude of young people. That pernicious volume passes into every hand—the contagion spreads, and infects an entire household. The effect is still more fatal if it be one of those abominable works where passionate intrigues, lascivious anecdotes, and obscene descriptions are joined with impious maxims, and principles of irreligion capable of destroying the fear of God, and shaking the foundations of Faith. That barrier once broken down into what excess will not they go, who have swallowed the poison? Into what disorders may they fall, and who can restrain them? Faith is the best safeguard of morals; it is the strongest dyke that can be opposed to the passions, and it once taken away, the torrent will break in and ravage all. Faith, so long as it exists in the soul, is a sort of warrant that virtue may return; if we do wrong, we at least condemn and reproach ourselves; but what is there to arrest the downward course of the sinner, if once he has lost his Faith: Is not the evil then almost irremediable, and should we not entirely despair of the salvation of a person who has fallen into such a state, were it not for our knowledge of the infinite mercy of God? O you, then, young people! who have as yet escaped this contagion, beware of

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reading pernicious books; reject them with horror when they are offered to you. Should one of them fall into your hands, do not even look at it, lest you might be tempted to read it; and say not that you read it only for obtaining instruction—to adorn your mind or to improve your style. You can derive these advantages from better sources, for there is no lack of excellent works of all kinds, which may be read without any danger to morality: consult an enlightened man, and he will point out to you more than you could read in the course of a long life—works which unite all the graces of style with sound and useful information. And, moreover, all the advantages which belong merely to this world would be too dear if purchased at the price of your innocence. If you give the preference to those which may corrupt you, it will then be passion that makes the choice.

6th, Plays. It is in theatres that the demon of impurity displays his pomp with so many charms and seducing graces, that the most solid virtue could scarcely withstand it. There every thing around breathes voluptuousness! the decorations, the effeminate songs, the games, the dress, all is adapted to ensnare; nothing, in short, is more opposed to the spirit of Christianity, which is a spirit of purity, of modesty, of prayer, and of penance.

It will not do to put off avoiding these occasions until one goes to confession, and is obliged to do so; it is very proper to leave them off before presenting one's self at the tribunal of penance, for that is the surest guarantee that one really proposes to commit these sins no more. We must also beware of concealing or glossing over these sins in confession, or even the circumstances which accompany them, which often make part of the sin itself; that would be to make confession of no avail and even commit a sacrilege, thereby exposing one's self to utter perdition.

They who would free themselves from this foul sin should confess frequently to the same confessor, a pious and enlightened director,—they ought carefully to shun all occasions which may lead to it—cherish a particular devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and offer up daily some prayer with that intention.

EXAMPLES.—All mankind, without distinction of sex or age, were buried in the waters of the deluge excepting only the just Noah and his family, because that “*all flesh had corrupted its ways*” says the Holy Scripture. Five infamous cities, consumed with all their inhabitants, by a shower of fire; twenty-four thousand Israelites put to death in one day for their sins of impurity; and God, by his praises and rewards declaring his approval of that fearful slaughter, are not these abundant proof that the Lord holds this sin in utter abomination, and that he frequently punishes it even in this life by chastisements the most terrible?

Fathers and mothers, masters and mistresses, if you see a bad book in the hands of your children, of your pupils, or servants, have, at least, as much zeal as Diderot—is that too much to ask of you? Snatch, then, even as he did, snatch with indignation from the hands of that young person, the book in which Religion was not treated with respect. And yet it was his own work that the unbeliever would not suffer his daughter to handle. It might have been said to him: If your doctrine is fatal, as you appear to acknowledge, why spread it abroad amongst men?—why diffuse throughout the great human family a poison which you considered deadly as regarded your own?

MERAULT.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not steal.

God forbids us, by his Seventh Commandment, to take or retain unjustly our neighbour's goods. The Master of all things, he distributes them as he pleases, and it is his will that we should respect the order which his Providence has established, for he forbids us to take from others what he has given to them. This law is imprinted in our heart: let us consult it, and we shall find that we ought not to do unto others what we would not that they should do unto us. If any one takes away from us that which belongs to us,

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we immediately cry out against his injustice; and injustice it would really be; but another has the same right to complain when we disregard the rules of justice in depriving him of that which is his. Without justice society could not subsist. It is therefore forbidden to injure our neighbour in his goods, in one way or the other.

He who taketh the goods of another, Saint Paul tells us, *shall never inherit the kingdom of God*. It is an act of injustice to take the goods of another by surprise, violence, or fraud, that is to say, deceiving our neighbour either by the weight, the quality, or the measure of merchandise sold to him.

Children are no more permitted to steal from their parents than from strangers; that being a real theft which is severely censured by the Holy Ghost in Scripture. He declares that whosoever stealeth from his father or his mother, and says that he sins not, is equal to a murderer. And why so? Because a young libertine who robs his parents in order to gratify his passions, evidently shows that he would fain take possession of their property and enjoy their wealth even before their death, which event he considers too long delayed; his heart must be truly a barbarous and cruel one, utterly void of all natural feeling.

It is also an injustice to retain the goods of our neighbour, by not paying him what we owe him, such as the wages of servants or workmen. "If any man hath done any work for thee" said Tobias to his son, "immediately pay him his hire; and let not the wages of thy hired servant stay with thee at all." It is an injustice not to restore what has been confided to our care, to appropriate to our own use things which have been found, without making any inquiries after the owner thereof, or to lend at usurious interest, that is to say, to extort more than we have lent.* It is, moreover, an injustice to cause any damage to our neighbour, such as destroying or spoiling what belongs to him, whether the injury is done by ourselves or that we engage another to do it.

* Although it is lawful to lend on interest, yet it is only when the capital is alienated—when the loan exposes the lender to any damage, or deprives him of a rightful gain.

When we have taken any thing belonging to our neighbour, or done him any injury, it is not enough to repent, and ask pardon of God; we must also make restitution to our neighbour for what he had taken from him, and repair, as far as we can, the injury which he has sustained: without this, there is no pardon to be obtained, nor no salvation to be expected, for we cannot enter heaven if weighed down with our neighbour's goods. When one is not able to make restitution just at once, he must at least have a sincere intention of fulfilling that obligation as soon as he can, and he must exert himself to the utmost in order to obtain the means of doing it.

This commandment obliges us also to give alms, each according to his means and the wants of the poor: of this we are assured by the wise man, when he says, that we ought to assist the poor because of the commandment, and not to abandon them in their distress. St. John says that if any one, having wealth, closes his heart against his brother who is in need, charity cannot abide in him; and Jesus Christ shall consign to eternal fire those who refused to assist him in the person of the poor.

"We are obliged," says St. Thomas "to give alms to those who are in want, and when we are blessed with a superfluity, according to our state and condition.

Although the word *alms* taken literally, signifies the distribution of temporal goods amongst the poor, it may be said, nevertheless, that there are other kind of alms still more meritorious, and it consists in relieving our neighbour in his necessities and in his spiritual wants. All men are not enabled to give alms to the poor, but all can assist them in a spiritual manner, in contributing to their salvation, either by giving them good example, by procuring it for them, or by giving them instruction. This obligation is especially binding on pastors, and on all those who are charged with instructing others and labouring for their salvation and sanctification.

It is doubtless a good deed to save the life of a poor man who is in danger of perishing with hunger; but to contribute to the salvation of a soul, is an act whose value will only be known in the other world.

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"He" says St. John, "who shall gain his brother, shall save his soul and cover the multitude of his sins. He who instructeth others shall shine like the stars in heaven."

EXAMPLES.—A Chinese barber who was a Christian, found in a street in Pekin a purse containing twenty gold pieces: he looked around to see whether any person would claim it, and supposing that it might belong to a gentleman who was walking some paces before him, he called to him and hastening after him, said: "Sir! have you lost any thing?" The gentleman thrust his hand into his pocket and found that his purse was gone. "I have lost," he replied, with an air of great embarrassment, "I have lost twenty gold pieces in a purse."—"Be comforted then," said the barber, "for here it is—and there is none of its contents lost, I assure you." The gentleman took the purse, and, once recovered from his fright, he began to express his admiration of an action so praiseworthy performed by a man of obscure condition. "But who are you?" he asked,— "what is your name, and whence do you come?"—"It matters little," returned the barber "that you know who I am; it suffices to tell you that I am a Christian, and one of those who profess the holy Law. This law not only forbids us to steal the goods of another, but even to retain what we find by chance if we can by any means discover the owner." The gentleman was so struck by the beauty of this morality, that he instantly repaired to a Christian church in order to be instructed in the mysteries of Religion. *Edifying Letters.*

A famous usurer, being at the point of death, sent for a confessor. The latter having found that all his wealth had been acquired by the unjust practice of usury, told him that he must absolutely make restitution. "But what will become of my children?" inquired the sick man. "The salvation of your soul" returned the priest "ought to be dearer to you than the welfare of your family."—"I cannot agree to do what you require," said the dying man, "and I must only run the risk." So he turned upon his bed, and soon after died. And what a death!—How it should cause those to tremble who owe the wealth which they possess to fraud and injustice. *Explanations on the Imperial Catechism.*

CHAPTER IX.

OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

By the Eighth Commandment God prohibits all injury towards our neighbour done by false or unfavourable reports.

God is truth itself, and all that is contrary to truth is offensive to Him: this is the foundation of the prohibition which we find so often repeated in Scripture against uttering what is not true. This vice is in fact most strongly opposed to the society or fellowship which God has established amongst men. For what purpose has speech been given them? Is it not that they might mutually communicate their thoughts? It is then to abuse the gift of speech to make use of it in expressing the opposite of what one thinks. This principle is so evident that even the Pagans understood it fully, and by some amongst them it was scrupulously practised. Lying is so odious that we are not even permitted to use it through sport, or for amusement, any more than under the pretence of being useful to ourselves or our neighbour; but it is a still greater crime when it injures our neighbour, when it tends to defame him, for instance, attributing to him a vice which he has not, or a fault which he has not committed: this is what is called calumny. This crime has in it something so black and so malignant that it is truly revolting to an upright mind. "The tongue of the calumniator" according to the expression of Scripture "is a two-edged sword inflicting mortal wounds." It is not only the fortune of his neighbour that he attacks, it is his honour, his reputation of which he would unjustly deprive him, that is to say, a treasure more precious than gold, and of which the loss is much more sensibly felt. But what crowns the enormity of this crime is when it is perpetrated before a magistrate, and confirmed by an oath, which is nothing less than deposing against the known truth. The false witness, besides the atrocious injury which he inflicts on the innocent whom he seeks to ruin, renders himself guilty of the most horrible impiety as regards God, whose dreadful name

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he profanes by making it serve to support falsehood and iniquity. They who have injured their neighbour by false reports are bound to repair the injustice they have committed, together with all its evil consequences; they must re-establish the honour which they have taken away, which can only be done by the public avowal of their imposture, so that they must absolutely sacrifice their own reputation to restore that which they had blighted and destroyed.

This commandment also forbids us to slander our neighbour, that is to say, to publish the evil that he really has done. So long as his fault remains hidden he preserves his reputation, and to publish that fault is to deprive him unjustly of his good name. Should we like to have our own hidden faults or failings made public? Certainly not—we should, therefore, be silent with regard to those of our brethren. Hence it is that detraction is set down in Scripture amongst the crimes which exclude from eternal happiness. Like fire that is carried along by the wind, slander passes from mouth to mouth, kindling as it goes, and scorching, at least, what it cannot consume; it is a restless evil which disturbs society, creates dissension in families, filling all with confusion and disorder: it is the poisonous source of hatred and revenge, and therefore the mainspring of numberless crimes and iniquities. The detractor has to answer for all the sin, of which he has been the cause; he has sinned in all those who repeated his slander after him: he has sinned in all those who heard it with pleasure, for it is not only forbidden to speak ill of one's neighbour, but even to listen to detraction. If no one would lend an ear to slander, then there would be no slanderers. The complaisance with which their detraction is heard authorizes and encourages them, and hence it is that the voluntary listener is an accomplice in the sin.

Of all kinds of detraction, the blackest and most fatal in its results, is that of telling one person in secret what another has said or done against him: these reports almost invariably give rise, in the heart of him who hears them, to hatred and a desire of revenge, which terminates in irreconcilable enmity.—The accused, unknowing what has been said of him, has no means of justifying himself, or explain

ing, or giving satisfaction. The character of him who makes these secret reports, is traced as follows in the holy Scripture. "There are six things which the Lord hateth, and his heart abhors the seventh; this seventh thing is the crime of him who soweth discord between brethren."

It is nevertheless, permitted to discover the faults of our neighbour when they are contagious, and may injure others. But even then they are only to be disclosed to those who have it in their power to remedy the evil, and to save others from falling into it; in that case, so far from wounding charity, we do but fulfil one of its most natural and most urgent duties; it is really doing good to our neighbour, when we endeavour to prevent him from destroying himself and others; it is doing him good, when we prefer to his reputation, his own salvation and that of the persons with whom he lives. Although detraction be in itself less criminal than calumny, nevertheless its consequences are still more fatal, and the injury which it does our neighbour is all but irreparable. In fact, when one has imputed to another a fault which he never committed, he can and ought to retract the accusation, and by that disavowal he cures the wound which he had inflicted, and re-establishes the reputation he had destroyed; but when he has only told the truth in his disclosure, then he cannot retract, without uttering a falsehood, which is, of course, strictly forbidden. Thus even should he obtain the grace of repentance, it is scarcely possible for him to repair the evil he has done or caused to be done; he must nevertheless do all that he can to that effect by publishing all the good that he knows of the same person, in order to efface, or at least, weaken the bad impression which his slander had caused.

By the Eighth Commandment God forbids us not only to speak ill of our neighbour, but also to entertain a bad opinion of him without just grounds. We are not permitted, then, to condemn our neighbour on slight foundations, or on equivocal appearances; if we believe him guilty without sufficient proof, we are ourselves guilty of unjust temerity, since we expose ourselves thereby to condemn the innocent. He has a right to our esteem so long as he is not convicted, and to withdraw it from him without suf-

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icient reason is to do him serious injury. Rash judgment is then contrary to justice and not less hurtful to charity. That virtue, so strongly recommended to us in the Gospel, leads us to think favourably of our brethren, to put a good construction on their actions, and to excuse in them what-ever is not manifestly bad. "Charity" says St. Paul, "thinketh no evil; it sees no crime which is not evident, and believeth it only when it is proved." Indeed, when we love any one we are more disposed to believe him innocent than guilty; how should we ourselves like, if without any reasonable grounds, we were set down as guilty of some bad action, or subject to certain faults?—We should not then do unto others what we would not have them do unto us. It would be still a rasher judgment and also more criminal, to attribute bad intentions to actions in themselves good and laudable, and to suspect evil motives in those whose external conduct is regular and edifying. Yet nothing is more common than to see malignity breathe its venom on virtuous actions; that excessive malice, which sees through the fair appearance of virtue only vice itself, can only proceed from a dark and corrupt soul. Virtuous people commonly judge others by themselves; even as they are upright and sincere, so do they consider others to be: they are edified by the exterior semblance of virtue, and are unwilling to believe that such appearances can conceal vice. Occupied with their own faults, for which they are to account, they pay no attention to those of others; and by that charitable conduct towards their neighbour, they prepare for themselves a favourable judgment at the tribunal of God, for Jesus Christ has assured us that we shall be judged ever as we have judged others.

EXAMPLES.—"The bishop Firmus," says St. Augustin, "through charity concealed in his house a man who, if taken, was to be put to death. The imperial officers demanded of the bishop if he knew where the man was. "I cannot answer you," said Firmus "because I can neither tell a falsehood, nor betray him whom you seek." The holy bishop was made to undergo the most cruel torments, so as to force him to tell where the man was, and he was even threatened with

death! "I know how to suffer and to die" he replied "but I know not how to speak either against truth or against my neighbour." He was brought before the emperor, who struck with his eminent virtue, sent him away unhurt, and also pardoned the man whom he had concealed. From this we learn that it is better to suffer death than to utter a falsehood, or to speak to the disadvantage of our neighbour.

Related by ST. AUGUSTIN.

St. Augustin, in order to prevent detraction, which is more common during meals, had two Latin verses, of which the following is the meaning, inscribed on the walls of the apartment wherein he usually eat:

Away with all slanderers,
Whose guilty tongue,
Rends the reputation of the absent,
Nought is permitted at this table
Save harmless conversation.

And one day when some of his friends, began to speak of the faults of a certain person, the Saint immediately reproved them, saying that if they went on so, he must either have those verses effaced from the wall or otherwise he must rise from table.—So firm should we be in preventing slander by every means in our power.

Life of St. Augustin, by POSSIDIUS.

CHAPTER X.

OF THE NINTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife.

AFTER having prohibited by his Sixth Commandment, all external acts of impurity, God forbids by the ninth, all impure thoughts and desires. We must not imagine that we fulfil the whole Law under this head by merely abstaining from the criminal action. No, that is not sufficient, for even the desire is a crime. God who fathoms the depths of the heart and of the will, is not satisfied with external purity, but wills that our hearts be also pure and permits us not

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even to desire that which he forbids us to do. The very thought of doing evil renders us guilty in his eyes when it is voluntary and deliberate, that is to say when we knowingly dwell upon it, and take pleasure therein: "Evil thoughts," says the Scripture "separate from God." They, therefore, bring death to our soul if we are not careful to put them away, and to banish them at their very first approach. Thus it is that the Law of God reaches the very root of the evil, and stifles it in its very origin. Experience proves that one comes not all of a sudden to commit criminal actions; it is only by degrees that we are led into them. The evil begins by a passing thought which is allowed to remain in the mind, and is entertained with pleasure; from thought springs desire, and from desire one passes to external acts. "It is from the heart" says Jesus Christ, "that all evil thoughts, fornication, and murder, proceed." That divine Master places evil thoughts at the head of all crimes, because they are their origin and their source. The true means of repressing the desire, is to reject the thought, as the best means of preventing the bad action is to stifle the desire thereof. We cannot, indeed, preserve ourselves from the approach of bad thoughts, but we can and ought to reject them: we cannot prevent them from occurring to our minds, but it is in our power to shun giving occasion to them—or taking pleasure in them, and we are also to combat them and struggle against them as often as they present themselves. We need not expect unbroken peace in this life, for it is one of warfare. Virtue does not consist in not being attacked, but in manfully resisting all the evil suggestions of our passions, and in keeping clear of the occasions of temptation. If, after all our watchfulness, it does present itself, let us immediately turn away our attention, elevate our heart to God, and employ ourselves in some useful occupation. It is a great remedy against that vice to apply one's self seriously to some useful labour, and never to remain idle. Only let the devil find us always busy, and his darts will fall powerless. Let us be faithful and fear nothing! if the devil importunes, and seeks to frighten us, let us close our hearts against him and then he is subdued. If we attach ourselves to God, he will never permit us to be tempted be-

yond our strength; then the temptation against which we have struggled, far from doing us harm, will become the cause of our triumph, and our fidelity shall merit an eternal reward.

EXAMPLE.—St. Bernardine of Sienna had so great a horror of any thing contrary to chastity, that when any of his companions spoke with ever so little freedom, his face was suffused with blushes. His presence alone restrained them within the strictest bounds of modesty. When they saw him approach, they said to each other: "Here comes Bernardine,—let us take care of what we say."

LASAUSSÉ

CHAPTER XI.

OF THE TENTH COMMANDMENT.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods.

GOD, having forbidden us by the Seventh Commandment, either to take or to retain the goods of another, by the tenth forbids us even to desire their possession. Let us here remark the essential difference which exists between the Law of God and the laws of men! the latter regulate only the exterior actions of men, because man sees only what meets his eye; but the Law of God forbids even the desire or the most secret thoughts, for God perceives the very depths of the heart. Doubtless it is not forbidden to covet what belongs to another when we propose to obtain it by lawful means and with the consent of the owner; otherwise it is not permitted to purchase any thing. When we buy a house, or a farm, it is because we desire to have it; but that desire is perfectly legitimate when, in making our purchase, we only make use of fair and lawful means. What this Commandment prohibits is the desire of obtaining *unjustly* that which belongs to our neighbour—the inordinate love of riches, and an unjustifiable eagerness in amassing wealth—it is, in short, that cupidity, which St. Paul styles the root and the source of all evil, and which God denounces as follows

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through the prophet Isaiah: "Woe to thee who join house to house, and land to land, even till space faileth thee, as though thou alone were to inhabit the whole earth!" Nothing is more opposed to the spirit of the Gospel than that greediness for riches which is never satisfied—never content with what it has, and always fearing to lose any portion thereof—going on heaping together, and accumulating as though one was never to die. A man who is given up to that passion is solely occupied with how he can best gratify his desires. He thinks of it every day, and meditates on it by night, and sacrifices to it his repose, his health, and even his life. Seeking a pretended happiness, which imagination tells him he will find in the possession of wealth, he renders himself miserable, and his years are past in incessant torment. What injustice does not that passion induce him to commit!—what fraud—what violence!—He counts for nothing his conscience and his salvation, provided he can only increase his treasure: in a word he knows no other God than money. Hence it is that St. Paul calls this passion an idolatry, and Our Lord tells us in the Gospel that we cannot serve two masters—that we cannot at the same time love God and money. It is not that He forbids us to possess riches, for they are given us by his Providence; but he forbids us to attach ourselves to them—he forbids us to place our affections upon them, or to make our happiness consist in possessing them; it is not wealth that he condemns, but only the immoderate desire of obtaining it. And, after all, how could the possession of riches confer happiness?—Evanescient are they and perishable, costing a thousand troubles and anxieties ere they can be obtained, and preserved only by excessive care—to be taken from us one day or another, without any manner of doubt, nor can we carry even the smallest portion from this world to the next—riches which will cause us the keenest anguish when we are forced to leave them behind, attached as we were to them—can such things render us happy?—Nothing can be wiser than the advice given us by the holy king David! "If thou hast riches, fix not thy heart upon them;" and if God has not disposed it so that you were born to wealth, seek not to become rich. This is the counsel given



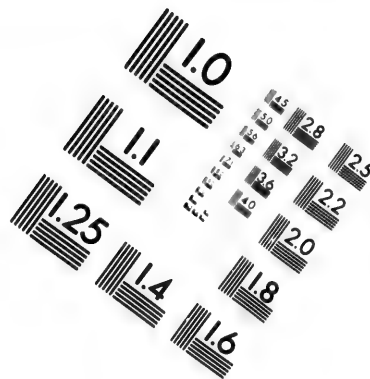
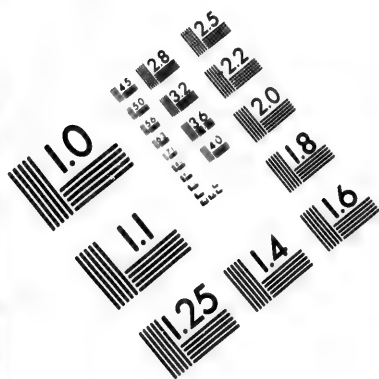
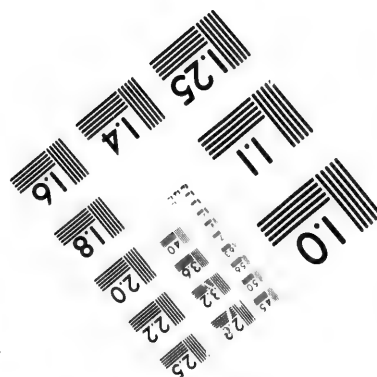
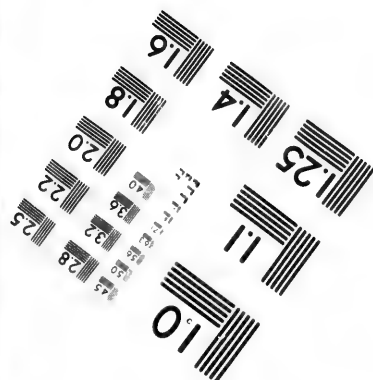
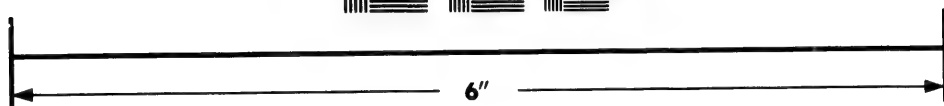
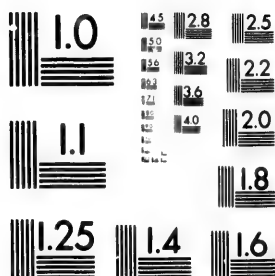


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us by Christ himself! "Heap not up to yourselves the treasures of the earth, which the rust and the moth consume but seek rather to lay up treasures in heaven, where neither the rust nor the moth doth consume! where a man's treasure is, there is his heart also."

EXAMPLE.—Tobias, having lost his sight, heard the beating of a kid which his wife, Anne, had received in payment for her labour, and he said to her! "Beware lest it may have been stolen. Restore it to those to whom it may belong. It is not permitted for us to touch any thing that has been stolen." Finding himself near his end, he gave this advice to his son; "If any man have worked for thee, pay him immediately what thou owest him, and let not the wages of thy hired servant dwell with thee."

Job. 4.

CHAPTER XII.

OF THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH.

THE Church has power to make commandments, and we are bound to obey her, because, being guided by the Holy Ghost, she speaks to us on his part. God will only regard as his children those who respect her as their mother. This power abides in the pastors whom she appoints to govern us, and it is of them that Our Lord has said! "Whosoever heareth you, heareth me, and whosoever despiseth you, despiseth me." And in another place, "He who will not hear the Church, let him be unto thee as the heathen and the publican." The Church has always exercised this power, which she has received from Jesus Christ. From the very birth of Christianity the Apostles made various ordinances, and we read in the book of the Acts that St. Paul, going from city to city, commanded their observance in the Churches, and that they were joyfully received by the primitive faithful. We ought, therefore, to respect them. It would be indeed disobeying God if we refused to submit to those who rule over us in his name. There are Six Commandments of the

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Church, which all good Catholics are bound faithfully to observe—these we shall explain in the following articles.

EXAMPLES.—A certain man being supposed to have a prepossession against the decisions of the Holy See, a friend of his one day said to him: "I pray you give me an advice, and tell me how I ought to act?—whether am I to think with the Pope or with you?" The answer was: "Keep fast hold of the trunk of the tree, and never separate yourself from it.

LASAUSSE.

"God will not damn us," said a bad Christian on one occasion, "if we keep his own Commandments, even though we set aside those of the Church." He was answered by another: "I never saw any one who despised the Commandments of the Church, observe with fidelity the Commandments of God."

LASAUSSE.

ARTICLE I.

OF THE FIRST COMMANDMENT OF THE CHURCH.

Sundays and Holydays thou shalt sanctify.

THE First Commandment of the Church obliges us to sanctify the festivals which she has instituted, by abstaining from servile works, and applying ourselves to acts of piety and religion. Some of these festivals have been established to celebrate the mysteries of our Lord's life, his Incarnation, his Nativity, his Circumcision, his Manifestation to the Gentiles, his Presentation in the Temple, his Resurrection, and his Ascension into heaven, the descent of the Holy Ghost on the Apostles, and the mystery of the divine Eucharist.

These mysteries being the source of all the graces we receive from God, and of the salvation for which we hope, their remembrance ought to excite in us sentiments of gratitude, adoration, and confidence, animating us to gather the fruits thereof by an increase of faith, hope, and charity. The other festivals are intended to commemorate, in the most Holy Virgin and the Saints, the graces which God poured

upon them, and the glory wherewith he has crowned them. They refer to their principal virtues, and encourage us to imitate them by pointing out to our view the ineffable happiness which is their reward. At the same time, convinced of our own weakness, of which we are continually reminded by experience, let us beg of them to employ on our behalf their credit with Almighty God, and to obtain for us through the merits of our common Redeemer, the grace to walk in their footsteps, to the end that we may one day arrive at that eternal felicity which they now enjoy. This is the reason why the Church annually brings before our eyes the blessings of God and the examples of the Saints.

In the Old Law God prescribed to the Israelites a certain number of festivals, to perpetuate the memory of the wonders he had wrought in their favour. It is after this divine model that the festivals of the Christian Church have been established, in order to honour God, to instruct the faithful, and to nourish their piety. The majesty of the divine offices, the instructions we receive, and the holy hymns which resound through the temples carry us back in spirit, to the times and places wherein those mysteries were accomplished; and we adore Jesus Christ as though those scenes were really passing before our eyes. These grand objects, thus made present by faith, and seconded by the teachings and exhortations of our pastors, do much to increase fervor and piety. It is, moreover, an opportunity for the most unlearned, and even children, to become acquainted with the cause of the festival, and to learn its history. The Church commands her pastors to make these things known to their respective flocks; and it is her wish that parents should do the same by their children. This is what God prescribed to the Israelites; having commanded them to sacrifice every year the paschal lamb, and to celebrate the festival of the Azymes, he announced to them the reason of that institution. "When your children" said he, "shall ask you what does this worship mean," you will say unto them: "It is the victim of the passage of the Lord, when striking the first-born of the Egyptians he passed over our houses and preserved them."

If we would duly sanctify festivals we must enter into

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the spirit of the Church, consider the mysteries, or the life of whatever Saint is then proposed to us,—praise God for his blessings, and beg of him the grace to profit by them. We ought to excite ourselves to practise the virtues which shone pre-eminently in the Saint honoured on that day, to the end that we may one day share in the happiness the Saints now enjoy. We should beseech them to intercede for us with God, and to obtain for us that assistance of which we stand in need.

EXAMPLE.—The impious Nicanor having taken the resolution to attack the Jews on the Sabbath day, a certain number of other Jews whom necessity retained in his army, represented to him that it was not proper to offer battle on a day consecrated to the Lord. But he, puffed up with his empty greatness, replied: “Is there a mighty God in heaven who commands us to celebrate the Sabbath?”—“Yes,” returned the Jews modestly, “He is the Living God and the Omnipotent Master of heaven.”—“Well!” answered the haughty Nicanor, “I who am all-powerful on earth, command you to take up arms in obedience to the orders of the king.”—Nicanor gave battle, was defeated, and found amongst the slain.

II. MACCABEES, 15.

ARTICLE II.

OF THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

Sundays and Holydays Mass thou shalt hear.

OF all the works of piety by which we ought to sanctify Sundays and festivals, the principal, and the most essential is that of hearing Mass, and the Church makes it an express Commandment. Sacrifice is the holiest act of Religion, and that which renders to God the most perfect honour; so the obligation of assisting thereat on every day consecrated to His worship is as ancient as the Church. We read in the Acts of the Apostles, that, on the first day of the week, which is Sunday, the faithful assembled for the breaking of bread, which signifies, the offering up of the holy Sacrifice

and the participation thereof. The parish Mass, when the pastor offers up the holy Sacrifice in the midst of his assembled flock, is a faithful imitation of what was observed amongst the first Christians; for it is at that Mass, celebrated by the pastor, that all the faithful ought to assist, and they do not fulfil the intention of the Church, if without any lawful hinderance, they content themselves with hearing a low Mass. In the first ages of the Church, the only legitimate assembly was that wherein the bishop presided in person. In later times, when the Christians had become more numerous, each diocese was subdivided into different parishes, to which the bishop sent priests to govern under his authority, to instruct the faithful, to celebrate the holy Sacrifice, and administer the Sacraments. Since that establishment, the faithful are bound to assist at the parish Mass. This obligation is founded on the most solid reasons: each parish is a family of whom the priest is the father and the head; is it not then perfectly just that all those who compose it should assemble with their chief to render unto God the solemn worship of Sacrifice and of adoration? The parochial Mass is said for all the faithful assembled under one head, and in their name; they ought then to unite with their priest in that august function and hear his voice raised on their behalf. The instructions there given are addressed to the parishioners, and are adapted to their spiritual wants, which their pastor knows better than any other; they are therefore more useful.

To satisfy this obligation, we must hear the entire Mass; for it would certainly not fulfil the commandment were one to arrive when the Mass was already far advanced, or leave the Church before its conclusion. It must be heard with attention, piety, and respect, not merely being present in the body; we must also join with the priest who speaks to God in the name of all present, and offers himself with Jesus Christ and the entire church. To have voluntary distractions, to gaze around, or to hold any conversation, is neither hearing Mass nor fulfilling the precept of the Church; it is outraging Jesus Christ, renewing the opprobrium of Calvary, and dishonouring Religion. We must then apply ourselves to prayer during all the time of the holy Mass, ma

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It is not enough to assist at Mass on Sundays and holy-days; we ought also to assist as much as possible at the other exercises of the Church, to read some pious book, &c. The Church, when she places at the head of the acts of piety, the assisting at the holy Mass, does not thereby exempt us from the others; and if she rests more on the obligation of the Mass, it is because that is the most important action, and the last that can be dispensed with.

EXAMPLE.—Even the fury of the persecutions did not prevent the faithful from celebrating the festivals of the Church. A Christian virgin named Anysia, being on her way to the assembly of the faithful, she was seen by a soldier of the Emperor's guard, who was much struck by her modesty. Going up to her, he said: "Stay! where art thou going?" Anysia, fearing that he meant insult to her, made the sign of the cross on her forehead to obtain from God strength to withstand the coming temptation. The soldier was offended, because she made him no other answer than that sign. Laying hold of her—he said angrily: "Answer me!—who art thou?—where art thou going?" She replied courageously! "I am a servant of Jesus Christ, and am on my way to the assembly of the Lord."—"Thou shalt not go there; I shall bring thee to sacrifice to the gods; to day we are adoring the sun, and thou shalt adore him with us." At the same time he tore away the veil which had covered her face, Anysia tried to prevent him, and, slapping him on the face, she said! "Avaunt, thou wretch!—Jesus Christ will punish thee!" Whereupon the soldier became so furious that he drew his sword, and plunged it into her heart. She fell bathed in her blood, but her soul was crowned with celestial glory.

FLEURY. *Ecclesiastical History.*

ARTICLE III.

OF THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

Confess thy sins at least once every year.

By this commandment the Church ordains two things: the first is to confess at least once in the course of the year, after having attained the age of discretion, that is to say, when once capable of discerning good from evil, and consequently, of committing mortal sin; the second is to confess to our own pastor, or parish priest. By this wise rule she wishes to remedy two abuses; in the first place she would put some restriction on the negligence of bad Christians who passed several years without approaching the tribunal of Penance, standing still in their old habits of sin. In the second place she would thereby prevent the abuse of persons applying to strange priests who knew nothing of them, in order more easily to obtain absolution, without being obliged to renounce their sins or reform their life.

To accomplish the precept of the Church, we are, therefore, bound to present ourselves at least once a year at the tribunal of Penance, and there to make an humble confession of our sins to our own pastor, or, with his permission, to some other approved priest.

Although the Church, through condescension, requires but one annual confession, in order to accommodate those who find that duty hard and painful, yet it is her desire that all should confess more frequently, as shewn by the words *at least*, which she adds to the Commandment. Thus, although we do not absolutely transgress the precept of the Church so long as we confess even once a year, that is not sufficient for her intention, nor does it satisfy her desire, especially when any one has had the misfortune of falling into mortal sin. God obliges all who feel themselves guilty not to defer their return to him; we must therefore apply as soon as possible to a prudent and enlightened priest, in order to obtain advice that may assist us to arise again. The precept of the Church, far from dispensing with this obligation, has no other purpose than to prevent us from becoming fixed in a state of sin, to the utter ruin of our soul. When the body

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is attacked by disease, do we wait a whole year before we send for a physician? And moreover, do we not expose ourselves to die in mortal sin, by remaining in it for the greater part of our life? For the rest, experience proves that one confession in the whole year is not sufficient for keeping up a Christian life; those who confine themselves to that, are generally engaged in some criminal courses, which they do not choose to give up, and hence even that one confession is a bad one; hence they do not even fulfil the Commandment of the Church, who, by imposing on her children the law of annual confession, obliges them at the same time to bring to the Sacrament the dispositions necessary in order to receive its fruit. To approach the Sacrament of Penance without a serious examination or a true contrition, is not fulfilling the precept of the Church, but only adding a new sin to those already committed. In a word the Commandment of the Church is not obeyed by making a bad confession. The Church has not fixed the precise time for the annual confession; but as she ordains in the same Canon that all should communicate at Easter, she evidently desires that this confession should be made about the time of Lent, so as to serve as a preparation for the Easter Communion. It is, therefore, very proper to present ourselves at the Sacred tribunal early in Lent, so as to, receive the advice of our Confessor in preparing for that important act.

EXAMPLES.—The venerable Bede relates in his history of England, that Conrad, a very pious prince, had in his court a nobleman to whom he was much attached because of his great services, but who, notwithstanding the earnest entreaties of the prince, remained several years without approaching the tribunal of Penance. He was at length attacked by a dangerous illness, whereupon the king went to see him, and urged him to send for a confessor, but even then he would not consent. The king went again to visit him, and finding him in the last extremity, implored him not to die in that state. But the unhappy man, having remained some time silent, fixed a wild stare on the king, and exclaimed: "It is too late—I am lost—hell is my portion!" and with these terrible words, he expired in impenitence and despair.

BEDE *History of England*, book 5.

A certain preacher commenced in the following manner, an instruction on the delay of conversion: "My brethren," said he, "while on my way to exercise my ministry amongst you, I was called upon to witness a harrowing spectacle, a young man was driving furiously along the street, and his carriage broke down—he was not killed on the instant, to be sure, but there was not a single limb of his that did not sustain some injury, so that he was in downright anguish. The people gather around, express their sympathy and compassion, and talk of going to fetch a doctor: 'A doctor' he cries—'At Easter I will have a doctor!' You may guess how great was the astonishment of the spectators, who, very naturally, concluded that he was deranged. You, my brethren! will be no less surprised if we ask you 'is not this fool like unto yourselves?'—Hurrying on in the career of vice you are suddenly cast down by some fatal accident; the noblest part of you—your soul is more than wounded—it is dead; you are told of a physician who is very powerful, not of himself, it is true, but in virtue of his mission received from God, and who is able to restore you to life; your answer is ever! 'At Easter—at Easter I will apply to that physician!' And how many are there who put no term to their delay?" This similitude made a lively impression on the minds of his hearers, the greater part of whom hastened to approach the tribunal of Penance.

MERAULT. *Teaching of Religion*, vol. 1.

ARTICLE IV.

OF THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

Receive your God about great Easter day

THE Church by her fourth Commandment, ordains that all the faithful should receive the holy Sacrament with respect at Easter time, and each in his own parish, and threatens with excommunication all those who fail to fulfil that duty.

All the faithful, and even children who have made their first communion are obliged to observe this precept.

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The reason which induced the Church to make this Commandment is the indifference of a great number of Christians for this august Sacrament, notwithstanding that Jesus Christ threatens to deprive of spiritual life those who refuse to participate in the Sacrament of his body and blood. The primitive faithful communicated very often; they regarded the Eucharist as the daily bread of the children of God, and they knew no grief more sensible than that of being deprived of it. In the course of time, charity waxed cold, people absented themselves from the holy Communion, and many Christians went so far as to pass several years without approaching the holy Table. It is, then, to prevent so grievous a disorder that the Church requires all her children, under the most severe penalties, to receive the divine Eucharist at least at Easter. Although she only obliges them to receive once in the year, she desires, nevertheless, that they should approach more frequently, for instance, at each of the great festivals.

She has even declared her wish, in the Holy Council of Trent, that the faithful should Communicate as often as they assisted at Mass, so as to derive the utmost profit from the Sacrifice. Hence, by receiving only at Easter, we do indeed accomplish the precept of the Church, but we do not fulfil the extent of her desire. In fact, it can scarcely be supposed that one Communion in the whole year should be sufficient to preserve and maintain the spiritual life, which is the life of grace; it is even to be feared that we do not thereby satisfy the precept, because we expose ourselves to communicate unworthily, and a bad Communion, far from fulfilling the law, is a horrible sacrilege and an outrage offered to the Church. She commands us to Communicate with all respect, and that respect consists principally in having the conscience purged from all mortal sin; it is to show to us this intention that she desires the Paschal Communion to be deferred for a time, when there is any just and reasonable cause. There is no reason for postponing it, so just or rational as the need of being perfectly purified; but it must be observed that the delay is to be made use of for preparing one's self, and should be curtailed as much as possible; for although the prescribed *fortnight* may be passed,

the obligation of receiving does not pass, but is always binding upon us until it is fulfilled.

EXAMPLE.—A bad Christian once went to his parish priest, and said to him: "Will your Reverence be good enough to come into the sacristy and hear my confession, for I want to make my Easter Communion. Of course we must obey the Church, and one of her Commandments is '*Receive thy God about great Easter day.*'"—"Very good," said the priest, "but remember that there are certain conditions required. Have you these necessary dispositions?—I doubt it much, for I know you very well."—"You know, then, that I lead a good life," returned the parishioner. "You wish to make your Easter Communion to-morrow, in obedience to the Church," said the priest, "but is there not another precept of the Church, which says '*Sundays and holydays Mass thou shalt hear,*' and I scarcely ever see you at Mass, on either Sunday or festival."—"Is there not another Commandment '*and holydays sanctify throughout the year,*' and yet you work on those days. Is it not commanded '*On Fridays and Saturdays flesh thou shalt not eat,*' and although you are in good health, you eat meat every day. And again, the Church says '*Lent, Ember-days, and vigils thou shalt fast*'—Do you obey that precept?" He replied: "I always fast on good Friday—be assured I do."—"But I know, moreover," resumed the priest, "that you get drunk two or three times in the week, and instruct your children so well, that they can curse and blaspheme just as well as yourself."—"I'll tell your reverence all that in my confession;—come and hear me, if you please, for I want to make my Easter Communion—that is all."—"I consent" replied the priest "to hear your confession, but before you can make your Easter Communion, you will have to reform your life."

LASAUSSE.

ARTICLE V.

OF THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

Lent, Ember-days, and Vigils thou shalt fast.

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on the Vigils of certain solemn festivals, and those three days of each season which are named Ember-days. The fast consists in taking but one meal, and in abstaining from certain things, such as meat, &c.

The fast of Lent is of the highest antiquity, and its institution, may be traced to the Apostles themselves. It was established in imitation of that of Our Lord, and to prepare us to celebrate worthily the great festival of Easter. This fast has always been more rigorously observed than the others: on ordinary fast days we take our repast before the hour of Nones, that is to say at three o'clock in the afternoon, whilst in Lent we neither eat nor drink till after the hour of Vespers, being six o'clock in the evening. To this rigorous fast the primitive Christians added long prayers, even during the night: they spent the time, moreover, in the greatest recollection and gave abundant alms. But the first fervour having decreased, the repast was then taken about noon-day, and people began to think that they might take a little nourishment towards the evening so as to enable them to bear the fast till the following day. The Church tolerates this collation so that it be very light, and not to be made a meal, for it is essential to the maintenance of the fast, that there be but one meal taken.

The fast of the Ember-days was instituted to consecrate by penance the four seasons of the year, to draw down the blessing of God on the gifts of the earth, and to implore him to give good ministers to his Church, that being the time when those who are destined for the august functions of the altar, usually receive holy orders.

Finally, Vigils are the days which precede the principal feasts. They are so called because in former times the faithful used to assemble in the churches on the eve of the great festivals, and passed there a portion of the night in praising God by the singing of psalms and reading of pious books, as we still do on the eve of Christmas. We fast on those days in order to dispose ourselves to celebrate the coming festival in a proper manner, and to derive good fruit from its due observance.

The law of fasting is obligatory on all the faithful, and cannot be dispensed with, except where the feebleness of age

or other infirmities, or hard and fatiguing labour renders it impracticable; any one to whom any of these exceptions applies ought to inform their priest for it is a great sin not to observe the fasts prescribed by the Church when there is no legitimate cause for dispensation; to violate them without necessity is to sin against God himself, who commands us to obey the Church. We nevertheless see a great number of Christians who, without any reason, violate the law of fasting; but the law is none the less binding, and the multitude of prevaricators can neither weaken nor destroy it.

Although none are strictly bound to fast until they have attained the age of twenty-one, yet young people are not the less bound to practise mortification in proportion to their strength, by retrenching something of their ordinary meals, and denying themselves certain trifling gratifications, the privation of which cannot injure their health. The same applies to all those whose infirmities or other reasons exempt them from the rigour of the fast. If they cannot accomplish the penance of the fast in its full extent, they ought to do it in part, uniting in mind and heart with the Penance of the whole Church, and making up in other good works for that which they are not able to do.

EXAMPLE.—A certain bad Christian, who was very guilty before God, chanced to read a book entitled the *History of Fasting*. He was struck by the rigour with which the fasts were observed in the first ages of the Church. He said to himself: "And I call myself a Christian, although I have never fasted; if I had lived in those times when the penitential canons were followed to the very letter, how many years of strict fasting would have been imposed upon me for many of the iniquities of which I am guilty! The primitive Christians took no collation on fast days; they all abstained from wine, and many there were who used only bread and water, nor did they take that one meal till the evening was come." What he read made a lasting impression on his mind, and gave rise to serious reflection, until at length God touched his heart. Penetrated with a lively sorrow for his sins, he resolved to do Penance, and with that intention

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he entered one of those monasteries wherein a rigorous silence is maintained, and where they fast continually, sleeping only on a hard couch, and interrupting their short repose to sing the praises of God during the night. LASAUSSE

ARTICLE VI.

OF THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

*Fridays and Saturdays flesh thou shalt not eat.**

By this last Commandment the Church forbids the use of meat on Friday and Saturday, in order to weaken the passions by mortifying the body; also to make us expiate our sins, and to keep alive in us the spirit of Penance, so strongly recommended by Jesus Christ, and which may indeed be considered as the abridgment of his divine morality. We are sinners and therefore obliged to do Penance; we are sick and should consequently, labour to effect our cure; we all have sins to expiate and it is by Penance that they are to be wiped away, and the divine justice satisfied; we each have passions to subdue, and that can only be done by retrenching all that tends to flatter them. The Church knowing our need of this remedy, and how unwilling we are to make use of it, comes herself to assist our weakness, and makes it an express Commandment, so as to induce us to submit the more readily. But, besides this general view, the Church, in imposing on us the law of abstinence, has other particular reasons which we ought to know: Friday she has always held as a day of penance and of mortification, since it was on that day that Christ died for our redemption, and it is just that we should take part in his sufferings, if we would have a share in the grace of Redemption. Hence it is that in the first ages of the Church, Friday was always a fast day. The faithful also fasted on Saturday in honour of the burial of Our Lord, and to prepare for the sanctification of the Sabbath. In the lapse of time the fast of these days has been reduced to simple abstinence, that is to say abstaining from the use of meat, and the Church makes it a law to which all are bound to submit. Even children are not exempt from this law, when once they are able to ob-

*By dispensation, the use of meat is now permitted in these countries.
on Saturday

serve it. It is only the real inability to obey the precept that can dispense with it in the sight of God, and this very inability must be made known to the Church in the person of a priest, to the end that he may relax the obligation in the name of the Church.

Let none then be deceived by the false reasoning of the impious who making a wrong application of the words of the Sacred Scripture, tell us that it is not meat which defiles the soul. Doubtless it is not the distinction of meats which can in itself honour God; but it is not a matter of indifference in the sight of God to obey or disobey the authority established by Himself; neither is it indifferent to him whether we preserve or extinguish within us the spirit of Penance which he has so strongly recommended to us. Let us not imitate those who without any reason, and on the very slightest pretext, permit themselves the use of meat on days when it is prohibited; the more prevalent the disorder is, the more need there is to bewail it, and to beware of being carried away by the torrent of example. It is a sensible proof of weakness of faith and indifference for salvation in a multitude of Christians.

EXAMPLES.—In one of the larger cities of France, a child whose parents were wholly destitute of piety, was preparing to approach for the first time to the holy Table. It was the unhappy practice in that house to eat meat every day without distinction. The child in his confession accused himself of that fault, and his director gave him certain rules on that subject which he was to observe for the future. The child promised to put them in practice, and the opportunity speedily presented itself. On the following Friday, meat was put, as usual, on the table, and he was offered some; he modestly refused to eat it, and when asked by his father why he did so, he mentioned the prohibition of the Church, and would not be prevailed upon to eat any thing better than a piece of dry bread. But the impious father irritated by his son's refusal, brutally condemned him to confine himself till next day to a room which he pointed out, and would not even give him the morsel of bread on which he would have dined. The boy instantly obeyed, and without a word o-

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complaint, nor the slightest appearance of ill-humour. Nevertheless the mother, although just as irreligious as her husband, was moved with compassion, and brought him secretly something to eat, at the same time reproaching him for disobeying his father and her. What was her surprise when the dear child calmly replied! "If papa had commanded me to do any thing that I could do, I should at once have obeyed him, and it is not through obstinacy that I refuse to do what he would have me. He has ordered me to stay here till to-morrow without eating any thing, and in that I can obey him without going against my conscience, so I hope you will not be angry if I do not accept what you are so kind as to bring me!" The mother, amazed to hear him express sentiments so pious and in terms so respectful, hastily withdrew to conceal the tears which she could no longer suppress, and then she went to relate to her husband the answer which the child had given her. The father was equally struck with admiration, and mingled his tears with those of his wife, both agreeing that their son was more reasonable and more virtuous than themselves. The father went immediately to embrace his son, and took blame to himself for his injustice, asking him at the same time who had given him such prudent advice. Learning that it was his confessor, he hastened to thank the priest for the care he had taken of his son, entreated him to hear his confession, and was converted together with his wife. Happy child! who was made the means of opening the eyes of his parents and leading them back from the way of sin and error!

MARGUET. *Essay on the Laws of Abstinence.*

"At the beginning of last Lent," said a pious ecclesiastic, "a woman came all in tears to ask to speak with me. She was ushered in; and at first remained perfectly silent. I invited her to sit down, but she seemed not to hear me, I repeated the invitation, and she answered only by her tears. What is the matter with you? said I, or is there any one sick at your house?" She hesitated; but at length she said, her voice choked with sobs: "Sir, you have amongst your penitents, a young girl named Adèle N——; she is my daughter—unhappy that I am! for the last six or seven

months her father and I have been killing her by inches—" here she stopped, unable to say another word. She sat down, apparently overcome by sorrow and remorse. Having recovered herself a little, she thus resumed! "During the time I have mentioned, there has not been one Friday or Saturday that we did not leave the poor girl covered with bruises, because she would not eat meat on those days. Her father has often even tied her to the foot of the bed, and gave her work to do, leaving beside her for food nothing but bread and meat; this he had done this very morning, and then we both quitted the house. Chancing to go in again, I found her sad and dejected, and began to feel some little pity for her. I know not what I said to her, but she told me she was sick and in pain, and falling on her knees she said to me! "I know I must obey God rather than men, so that I can never bring myself to do what you require of me; nevertheless I am afraid of doing wrong by resisting your will so long. My dear mother, I beg your pardon, but I can promise you nothing, nor do nothing more than to beg of God that he may make you understand the sin you commit in eating meat on days when it is prohibited, and that you may obtain the grace to do Penance for it. Pray go to confession, my dear mother, and you shall see—" She was going on, but I threw my arms around her neck, and pressing her in my arms, promised to follow her advice. I come then to ask at what hour I will find you in the church. My child is still bound, for when I would have unloosed her, she told me it was for her father who had tied her there to set her free when he pleased."

Such was the account given by the mother. I admired the fortitude of the girl, and regarded her parent's conversion as the reward which God had granted to her heroic perseverance. I afterwards learned that a scene nearly similar took place in their dwelling when the father returned in the evening. He also came to confession, following the example of his wife. A short time after, I inquired of their daughter why she had never spoken to me of the bad treatment she had been receiving. Her answer was that she would not say any thing bad of her parents, which reply increased my admiration still farther, and I plainly recognized

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Explanation of the Catechism of Dijon.

CHAPTER XIII.

OF SIN.

SIN, which means a disobedience to the Law of God, is of all evils the greatest, since it offends God who is supremely good. It is, moreover, a monstrous ingratitude, for by it we offend a God who has created us, and who still preserves us and loads us with blessings from day to day. The sinner is like unto a beloved child who outrages a good father: what a heinous crime! That we may better understand the enormity of sin, let us consider what it has cost Jesus Christ to expiate it, and that thought alone is sufficient to make us regard it with horror. Let us also behold the terrible chastisement with which God punishes sin; all the miseries spread over the earth, all the trials of life, sickness, and death, are the fatal effects of one single sin, committed by our first parents.

Sin is of two sorts, Original and Actual. Original sin is that wherein we are born. All mankind, excepting only the Blessed Virgin, have been stained with this sin. Actual sin is that which we wilfully commit, after having attained the use of reason. Actual sin is committed in four different ways: by thought, word, deed, and omission. The Law of God forbids not only the evil action, but even the thought or desire of doing it; it not only restrains the hand and the tongue, but also regulates the mind and heart; it is in the heart that disobedience begins: the heart is the source of sin, of which words and deeds are but the exterior effects.

Actual sin is of two sorts, mortal and venial. A sin is mortal when the matter is considerable, and when it is committed with free consent. Venial sin is that of smaller moment, or not committed deliberately if the matter be of greater importance.

Mortal sin is the greatest of all evils, for it deprives us of sanctifying grace, and of all claim to the celestial inherit

ance; it gives death to the soul by separating it from God, who is its life, as the soul is the life of the body, and it renders us worthy of eternal damnation. When one has the misfortune to commit a mortal sin he becomes the slave of the devil, the enemy of God, the object of his hatred and of his everlasting vengeance. Can there be any evil like unto that? What horror should we not have of sin, and with what care should we not avoid it? No, there is nothing that we should not be disposed to suffer rather than commit a single mortal sin. We should fly sin as we would a serpent. Suppose we were to meet a serpent, and had reason to expect being devoured by him, with what haste we would get out of his way?—In our terror we would hurry away as fast as our limbs could carry us, fearing at every step lest he might overtake us? Well! shall we do less to save our soul than we would for the preservation of the body? If unfortunately one had committed a mortal sin, it would be necessary to repent immediately, and frequently to pronounce, with one's whole heart, acts of contrition and of Love of God, and to prepare for confessing as soon as possible. We should also take care to avoid venial sins, that is to say, those which do not deprive the soul of the grace that sanctifies, but which weaken and enfeeble it; which do not render us worthy of eternal perdition, yet subject us to temporary punishment. Even the smallest sin is a great evil, because it offends God. Moreover, venial sin when neglected, exposes to mortal sin.—“He who despiseth smaller faults” says the Holy Spirit, “shall fall by degrees into greater, and in the end will be eternally lost.” Let us then never commit any sin deliberately or with consent; but rather let us avoid, according to the precept of the Apostle, even the appearance of evil.

EXAMPLE.—*Wise answers made by persons whom others would induce to sin.* “By sinning, I shall disobey God, and obey the devil. What injustice! what ingratitude, and what madness!”—“How could I commit so great a crime, and sin against my God?” (*Joseph to the wife of Potiphar.*)—“It is better for me to die than to sin in the presence of the Lord” (*Susannah.*)—“We ought to obey the Law of

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God rather than the king." (*Maccabees*).—"In proposing to me to offend God, and to ruin my soul by sin, what will you give me if I revolt against Him, and lose my own soul?"—"I have in God a master so great, so good, so liberal, who has been ever bountiful to me, and from whom I expect eternal life, glory, and happiness; and yet you would have me disobey—offend—abandon, and insult him—you would have me declare myself his enemy, and run the risk of incurring his anger, his wrath, his vengeance!"—"Before you commit sin, seek a place where God is not present,—where he sees you not, and where he is not able to deprive you instantly of life and cast you into hell."—"Away—begone! I shall not be the fool to poison my soul by enjoying for a few brief moments, the deceitful sweetness of a draught which would very soon cause me grievous suffering, and which would render me deserving of eternal death,—nay, inevitably bring it upon me, if I did not wipe away the foul stain by penitential tears!"

LASAUSSE.

CHAPTER XIV.

OF THE CAPITAL SINS.

ALL the sins that man is wont to commit are usually reduced to seven principal sins, which are called *capital* because they are as the source and origin of all the others. The capital sins are *pride*, *covetousness* or *avarice*, *lust*, *gluttony*, *envy*, *anger*, and *sloth*.

EXAMPLE.—A certain young man, going through a forest, was attacked by a frightful monster, having the body of a lion, surmounted by seven heads like that of a serpent. The beast, darting forth from his den, came right upon him with flaming eyes, rearing up his seven heads, and protruding his seven tongues, while he filled the air with his horrible roaring. The young man, being strong and courageous, was not dismayed but boldly stood his ground. He had no other arms than an axe which according to the custom of the country, hung suspended from his girdle; laying

hold of his weapon, at the very first blow he cut off four of the beast's heads, and with a second stroke, two more. Exhausted by his wounds the dragon lay some time extended on the ground, and our traveller, believing him dead, put up his axe, and resumed his journey, thinking it quite unnecessary to cut off the seventh head. Scarcely had he gone a few paces when the monster, recovering himself, arose, and again sprang towards him with the greatest fury, seized him in his ravenous jaws, and carried him off to his den, where he devoured him.

Behold the explanation of this parable: 1st., this dragon represents the seven capital sins, which must be courageously resisted with the arms of Faith; 2nd., it is not enough to cut off six of the heads of this monster, for if you leave him even one you are lost. Of what avail is it that you are free from certain passions if even one be allowed to govern you? Most commonly it is one particular vice which destroys the soul. Examine whether, in your combats with the infernal lion, you have not left him one, wherewith to devour you; or whether in correcting your passions, you do not spare one darling propensity which may be quite enough to ensure your eternal perdition: your victory goes for nought, if it be not complete. 3rd. We must persevere even till the end, and struggle on till death; never wearying in the combat, nor seeking rest, until we have defeated all our enemies; otherwise they will lay hold of us when we least expect it, and draw us with them into the abyss of hell.

FATHER E. GIRAudeau.

ARTICLE I.

OF PRIDE.

PRIDE is an inordinate love and esteem of one's self, causing us to prefer ourselves before all others, and to refer all to ourselves and nothing to God! pride is offensive to God because by it we glorify ourselves for his gifts, instead of referring all the honour to him: thence proceeds vanity and the overweening desire of praise and esteem. The proud man must be admired and applauded for all that he

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does; when he has received the approbation of men he is perfectly satisfied, and seeks after flattery with the utmost avidity. He carefully conceals the faults which he has, and affects virtues which he really has not his whole object is to draw upon him the attention of others, and to make the world believe him better than he is; thence comes the contempt of his neighbour. The exalted opinion which he entertains of himself causes him to look down on others; considering himself far above them, he demeans himself proudly and arrogantly; he speaks to them haughtily, and with a disdainful air; thence comes disobedience. The proud man will not submit to the orders of his superiors, and spurns their advice; all authority is displeasing to him, for he fancies that he was not made to obey: hence comes, in fine, that forgetfulness of his true interest. He totally neglects the affair of his salvation, his whole care being to ornament his body with the trappings of fashion, and to walk thus an "idol of flesh" through the gay circles of the world, drawing around him a crowd of adorers; decency, and decorum are often sacrificed if fashion require it, even although the effect may be truly ridiculous. How detestable is this vice! and how carefully should we avoid it!—Let us remember that pride is odious both to God and man, and that God is pleased to confound the proud, but gives his grace to the humble.

Christian humility is the virtue opposed to pride, and is, in fact, the foundation of all virtues; the humble are aware of the depth of misery that is in us—they despise themselves, and are content to be despised by others. In effect, if we consider what we really are, what cause shall we not find for humbling ourselves!—Not to speak of the infirmities of the body,—of that body which came forth from the dust, and must return to whence it came,—let us reflect on the state of our soul, and what shall we see?—Ignorance in the mind, corruption in the heart—what a propensity for evil, and what inconstancy for good!—We have in ourselves nought but nothingness and sin; if we have any thing in us good or estimable we have it from Gcd: the advantages of mind and body, the gifts of nature and of grace, all come from God. One who is penetrated with this convic-

tion is far removed from pride,—from seeking for praise, or hunting after vain honours; if he finds himself in possession of any good qualities, he refers to God all the glory and merit; but his faults he regards with the greatest attention, and humbles himself for them before God. Happy are they who are humble of heart, because they shall be loaded with the blessings of the Lord—and woe to the arrogant and presumptuous for them shall the Lord cover with confusion.

EXAMPLE.—A certain nobleman, priding himself on a name which he dishonoured by his vices, would fain humble a man, who though of low birth, was endowed with singular merit, and he reproached him with having no ancestors of whom he could boast. The other, far from being irritated, replied with a smile: "If my origin disgraces me, you disgrace yours!"—Let us then learn to respect virtue wherever it is to be found, nor ever forget that true merit depends on our works and not on our employments, or our dignity.

ARTICLE II.

ON COVETOUSNESS.

COVETOUSNESS or avarice is an inordinate attachment to the things of the earth. It is not a sin to have riches, but it is a sin to fix our hearts upon them, to seek them with too much eagerness, to place our happiness in possessing them, and to use unjust means of obtaining them. Avarice produces forgetfulness of God, by inducing man to make his treasures the object of his worship, hence it is that St. Paul sets down this sin as a species of idolatry. Men have only indifference for their salvation when their whole thoughts are given to the amassing of wealth; they are but little affected with the desire or the hope of eternal goods, while so much taken up with the care of acquiring those which are but temporal, and it is to be feared that he who is infected with the passion of becoming rich, can no longer be considered a Christian. Avarice begets harshness towards the poor. He who is attached to his riches is insensible to

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the misery of others, and knows no sentiment of compassion. Worse still, he forgets himself; he becomes regardless of his own wants, prefers his money to his health, nay, even to his life, and denies himself the commonest necessities for fear of diminishing his treasure; he heaps up riches without making use of them, he is poor with all his wealth, and wants in the midst of plenty. What madness is his!—Finally, this vice gives rise to duplicity, for the miser, in order to acquire the goods of another on which he has set his eye, has resort to stratagem, fraud, and injustice. “None is so unjust” says the Holy Ghost in the sacred scriptures “as he who loveth money! such a man would sell his own soul.” He who is governed by this passion knows neither good faith, nor honour, nor conscience; he becomes unjust, fraudulent, and violent; all means, even the most criminal, are employed, in order to increase the treasure on which his heart is fixed; and the worst of all is that this passion grows stronger with age. Advancing years, and reflection reduce and weaken other passions, but avarice seems to revive and to acquire new strength as age approaches. The farther the miser advances towards that fatal moment when all must be abandoned, the more tenaciously does his heart cling to his wretched hoards; the nearer he sees death approaching, the more closely does he clutch his gold, and look upon it as a necessary precaution for a chimerical futurity. “Fool!” says Our Lord in the Gospel, “This night thy soul shall be demanded of thee,—for whom shall these riches be that thou hast heaped together?” He shall leave his wealth to others, and himself shall retain but a worn winding-sheet, a coffin, and a grave.

Beware, then, of a passion so unreasonable and so dangerous. “Instructed in the school of Christ, let us not seek to amass treasures on the earth, where the worm and the rust do consume, and where robbers can break in and steal; but labour to store up treasures in heaven, where the worm eateth not, nor the rust doth consume, nor robbers take away.” Let us endeavour to acquire the virtue opposed to avarice, which virtue is a christian detachment from the things of this world, whether we be in poverty or in affluence. If we are poor, let us not envy those who are rich,

nor desire to possess what belongs not to us; these fragile and perishable things, so far from satiating our desires only serve to excite them still more. The just man is happier with the little he possesses than are the wicked with all their treasures. "Fear nothing," said Tobias to his son, "it is true that we are poor, but we shall be rich indeed if we fear God, shun evil, and do good." If we have wherewith to support us and keep us decently clothed, we should be content. Hence, let those who have wealth remember that they can take nothing with them to the other world; let them pour them out upon the poor, so as to realize, by their means, a treasure for themselves which shall never perish.

EXAMPLE.—There is on record the story of a miser, furnishing a very singular fact, together with a most tragical end. This man, being possessed by the demon of avarice thought of nothing but how he was to accumulate treasure, and add heap to heap. Fearful lest any one should deprive him of his treasures, he hollowed out in the floor of his cellar a subterraneous place, having an iron door so contrived that it was imperceptible to any one not acquainted with the secret. No sooner did he receive any considerable sum than he went to hide it there, and his delight was to sit gazing at his leisure on his gold and silver, which were to him as gods. One day when he had gone to deposit some money in this gloomy vault, he forgot to take the key from the outside, and closing the door upon himself, he commenced reckoning his hoarded treasures. When he had amused himself thus for some time, he would have retired, but the door could not be opened inside without the key, so that he found himself unable to get away, and his situation may easily be imagined. There is reason to believe that he cried out and knocked as long as he was able, but how could any one hear him and who would ever think of looking for him in such a place?

Meanwhile his family, seeing that he did not return, became seriously alarmed. They sought all around, and caused inquiries to be every where made, but all in vain: they at first thought that he might have been drowned, or probably murdered: in a word that he had lost his life by

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some fatal accident. Suddenly a locksmith in the place, hearing the event much talked of, began to remember that the miser had once caused him to make secretly an iron door with a spring lock, and that he might unfortunately have closed himself in through mistake. He made known his apprehensions, and led the way to the spot where he had placed the iron door—some persons entered, and how great was their astonishment, fright, and horror when they discovered the putrifying body of the wretched miser!—It was easy to see how the catastrophe had come upon him, so they searched the place and found immense treasures heaped up together,—treasures indeed of wrath and of malediction.

BEAUDRAND, *Edifying Narratives*.

ARTICLE III.

OF LUXURY OR LUST.

LUXURY is a criminal affection for pleasures opposed to Christian chastity. Nothing is more degrading to man than this shameful vice; nothing more opposed to the sanctity of our vocation, so that Christians ought not even to know it. In order to see this vice in all its real horror, we have only to consider its unhappy effects. It begets a hatred of God, an aversion for the duties of religion, hardness of heart, in fine the ruin of society: for they who yield themselves up to its excess are speedily carried to the grave. He who is addicted to this vice cannot be ignorant that God looks upon it with horror; hence he sees in him only the severe avenger of these shameful excesses, and he conceives in his heart a feeling of hatred towards him who is one day to be his judge and to punish him with rigor. The exercises of religion are totally incompatible with this vice when once it obtains the mastery. Prayer is found tiresome, and is neglected; the word of God condemns, and it is no longer listened to; in order to approach the Sacraments vice must be renounced, so they too are abandoned. By thus stifling the voice of conscience, the sinner falls into a lethargy, that is to say, a state of insensibility in which nothing any more affects him: he becomes blind to his duties, to his reputation,

to his health ; he forgets all his interests and will hear neither advice, nor remonstrance ; he thinks only of gratifying his brutal appetite, whatever may be the consequence, and fears nothing but being disturbed in the enjoyment of his guilty pleasures. Hence the horror of death which torments the voluptuous sinner, because it is to separate him from all he holds dear, and to cite him before the dread tribunal of God. Let us then detest a vice so fatal, and make ourselves secure with the assistance of God's grace, in the contrary virtue, Christian chastity, which regulates us, with respect to purity, according to the state in which Providence has placed us.

This beautiful virtue renders us like unto the angels themselves : it is infinitely pleasing to God, and he rewards it in a munificent manner, sometimes even in this life. Our Lord promises heaven to those by whom it is practised : "Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God." To preserve this virtue, which is exposed to many dangers, there are two means which Jesus Christ himself has made known to us in the Gospel : they are vigilance and prayer. "Watch and pray," says he, "that ye enter not into temptation !" To watch over one's self, is to guard against all that might give the slightest wound to this precious virtue. We must watch our eyes, that they never rest on any dangerous object ; our ears, that they listen not to bad discourse ; we must guard our mind, so as to keep away all thoughts and ideas contrary to purity, and our heart, so as to stifle all evil desires in their very birth. "As soon as a bad thought arises in your mind," says St. Bernard, "repulse it with firmness, and it will depart from you ; but if you suffer it to remain a moment, its image will excite in your heart a pleasure fatal to your innocence : that pleasure will lead to consent, consent to action, action to habit, habit to necessity, and necessity to eternal death." By rejecting immediately and with force, all dangerous thoughts, we avoid this frightful chain of misfortunes. Secondly, we must have recourse to prayer when we feel the very first motion of this passion, saying with confidence, as did the Apostles : "Lord ! save me, or I perish !" Let us not even wait till we are tempted in order to have recourse to God. Let us pray him often and with fervour, either to preserve

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us from temptation, or to give us strength to surmount it. Let us also beg the assistance of the Blessed Virgin, our angel guardian, and our patron Saint. If we are faithful to this practice, we may be sure that we shall obtain the victory, and even derive advantage from temptation, by becoming firmer in the path of virtue.

EXAMPLE.—There was in a certain city a scholar who justly passed for a model of virtue, and who frequented the Sacraments in the most edifying manner. Going one Sunday to church to perform his devotions as usual, he met two of his comrades who were not at all as pious as he was. They invited him to breakfast in a neighbouring inn, and he refused for some time, but they insisted, urged, and at last drew him away with them. They sat down to table, and he drank, at first through compulsion, but afterwards of his own accord; his senses gradually gave way, and he became intoxicated: while in that state he was induced to commit a shameful crime, and at that very moment it was that he was struck dead! —

How terrible are thy judgments, O my God! and how impenetrable thy ways!—the unhappy companions of this poor wretch, being seized with terror, immediately went to expiate by a rigorous course of penance the irreparable crime of having plunged a soul into hell!

COLLET.

ARTICLE IV.

OF ENVY.

ENVY is a criminal sorrow for the welfare of our neighbour. The envious are wounded by the merit of others; they cannot bear to be surpassed, or even equalled, and are grieved to see in another talents or virtues which they do not possess, yet which they would fain engross to themselves. If the sight of those advantages which others are seen to have, inspired only the desire of imitating them, then the feeling would not be envy, it would be a noble emulation, but that is widely different from what the envious feel: they do not so much desire to possess these estimable qualities as to see others deprived of them; they look upon

the good fortune of others as a positive misfortune to themselves, the success of their neighbour as a real loss, and his reputation as it were a disgrace to them. This unhappy disposition of the heart is like a gnawing worm: it is a poison which consumes in secret, so that its miserable victim is his own executioner. How low and base is this vice, and how fatal are its consequences! The first effect of envy is the joy caused by the misfortune of another. If the person envied falls into disgrace, the envious man rejoices, and exults in his downfall; and he takes a malignant pleasure in seeing him humbled, though at the same time, he may never have injured him in any way. A vindictive man attacks only his enemies, or those from whom he has received, or thinks he has received some injury, but the envious hate those against whom they have no cause of complaint, but only their virtues—their whole crime is the possession of some peculiar virtue or talent. How monstrous! Is the heart of man, then, capable of such depravity? The second effect of envy is slander and calumny; the envious seek to lessen the reputation of those whose merit annoys them, and try by every means to have them spoken of less favourably; giving malicious interpretations to all their actions; twisting the fairest virtues into vices, representing piety as only dissimulation and hypocrisy, and success as the effect of chance, not of superior talents or abilities. The third effect of envy is the actual intention of injuring one's neighbour. From words the envious proceed to deeds; they thwart the designs of the other in every way they can, and take every means to give him trouble, to prevent him from obtaining what he desires, or to deprive him of it, if already obtained. Hence they sometimes are carried to commit the most violent excesses. It was through envy that Cain killed his brother, and it was envy that inspired the brethren of Joseph with the design of putting him to death, and induced them to sell him as a slave. It was envy that prompted the Pharisees and doctors of the law to calumniate, persecute, and crucify the very Son of God. Let us, then, never open our hearts to this detestable vice, and let us do all we can to acquire the opposite virtue, which is a Christian affection, that renders us sensible to the happiness and to the misfor-

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This affection is nothing more or less than charity: he who is animated by charity sympathizes with his brethren in all that befalls them, rejoicing in their joy, and mourning with them in their sorrow, and in short is susceptible to whatever concerns them, as though it concerned himself.

EXAMPLE.—There were two merchants who lived near each other in a city, and being mutually jealous they lived in the most scandalous enmity. It chanced, however, that one of the two, beginning to reflect, on his state, listened to the voice of religion, although it condemned his animosity; he consulted a pious person in whom he confided, and besought him to advise him as to how he was to effect his reconciliation with his neighbour. "The best way," was the answer, "is this which I am about to point out to you: when people come into your shop to buy, and that you have not what they want, direct them to go to him." This advice was followed, and the other merchant, being told who it was that sent him so many customers, was deeply touched by such conduct in a man whom he had regarded as his enemy. He went to his house on purpose to thank him, begged his pardon for the ill-will he had borne him, and entreated him to receive him as a friend. His request was readily granted, and Religion drew closely together those whom interest and jealousy had kept asunder.

Christian Reading.

ARTICLE V.

ON GLUTTONY.

GLUTTONY is an inordinate love of eating and drinking. We are not forbidden to feel pleasure in either the one or the other; for it is by a wise foresight that God has seasoned with a feeling of gratification the use of the food necessary for preserving our health and life. But we abuse this blessing when we seek only the pleasure alone; we must eat and drink in order to live, and not to flatter sen-

suality. Our sole end should be to satisfy the wants of nature, that we may be enabled to fulfil our duties and serve God, according to the words of the Apostle: "Whether you eat, or drink, do all for the glory of God." If we wish to observe this precept of St. Paul, we must, in our repasts, think not of gratifying the body, but of following the order of God, who wills that we should preserve life. To seek only the gratification of the senses is gluttony, a vice unworthy of man: it weighs down the soul, brutalizes the mind, ruins the health and shortens life. "Gluttony kills more than the sword," said an ancient writer. It produces drunkenness, and excess in eating. This detestable vice degrades man, and places him even below the beast. Hence well-bred people are seldom subject to it, for a man of education and refinement will carefully avoid it. It begets sensuality, which consists in seeking exquisite and delicate meats, or in making use of things which we know to be injurious to health, because they gratify the appetite; and finally, in eating too greedily of even ordinary food. What a shame it is for a rational man to let himself be governed by sensuality, instead of repressing its first motions! Gluttony gives rise, moreover, to forgetfulness and contempt of the laws of the Church. One who is addicted to that vice, is but little disposed to practise the fasts and abstinence which the Church ordains; he thinks not of mortifying himself; the laws which prescribe certain privations appear an insupportable yoke, and he seeks pretences to evade their observance, and not only does he neglect to keep the fast, but even scruples not to use forbidden meats. Finally, gluttony gives rise to dissension; for it is from intemperance that quarrels, and wrath, and animosity arise. We have in the Scripture a striking picture of it, traced by the Holy Ghost himself; here is the way in which it is depicted: "To whom shall we be said? for whom shall there be quarrels? for whom snares and downfalls,—for whom wounds, if it be not for those who pass their time in drinking, and who take pleasure in emptying cups?"

We ought, therefore, to have a lively horror of a vice so degrading to a man, and still more so to a Christian. Let us, in all our repasts, practise Christian sobriety, that virtue

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which regulates the use of eating and drinking according to necessity,—that virtue which makes the body more robust, and prolongs our life; let us watch over ourselves that we pass not the bounds of real necessity, in an act, which of itself tends to satisfy nature. A Christian regards food as a remedy; he heeds neither the promptings of greed, nor of sensuality; he avoids delicacies, and the search after any thing that flatters the senses; in a word, he thinks only of imitating Jesus Christ, who chose to subject himself to this humiliating action, in order to leave us a model; he has always before his mind that salutary advice which our Lord himself has given us: "Watch carefully over yourselves, that your hearts be not weighed down by the excess of meat and of wine, and that the day of the Lord may not take you by surprise." The most efficacious means of keeping in mind the rules of temperance, and obtaining strength to follow them, is to say, piously, the prayer before and after meals. By this we shall draw down upon ourselves the blessing of God, and obtain the grace not to offend Him. •

EXAMPLE.—In all the records of crime, disorders and excesses, perhaps there is nothing so horrible or tragical as what happened to a young man, in Africa, in St. Augustine's time. This young man was named Cyril; he was much addicted to drinking, and spent a great part of his time in taverns, with companions as debauched as himself. One day, when he had, as usual, gratified his beastly passions, he went home in a state of intoxication, and commenced operations by stabbing one of his sisters. Alarmed by her cries, the father ran to the spot; whereupon the son, in a fit of fury, attacked him too, and imbrued his hands in the blood of the author of his life. He also stabbed another of his sisters, who attempted to save her father from the murderous hand of that unnatural son, or rather, of that execrable monster.

How many crimes—atrocious crimes—committed by one man, in one single day! St. Augustine was very soon informed of this lamentable occurrence, and although he had already preached twice that day, he immediately caused the people to assemble a third time; and ascended the pulpit.

with tearful eyes and a sorrowful heart, to relate to his hearers this horrible tragedy. On hearing what had happened, the whole assembly broke forth into cries and lamentations, never having thought it possible that a man could go to such lengths in iniquity; and fearing that the wrath of Heaven might fall on their city, for having given birth to such a monster. St. Augustine availed himself of the opportunity to show how far an evil passion can carry its unhappy victim. His tears and sobs spoke more forcibly than any words could do.

Related by St. Augustine.

ARTICLE VI.

OF ANGER.

THERE is a holy anger excited by zeal, which moves us to reprove, with warmth, those whom our mildness failed in correcting: such is the anger of a father, or of a master, on seeing the disorders which he is bound to prevent. Our Lord, himself, was moved with this anger, when he drove from the Temple those who profaned its sanctuary. But the anger which is a capital sin is of a very different kind, being an impetuous emotion of the soul which incites us to spurn, with violence, any thing that offends us. It springs from an evil principle, for it is the effect of a passion which rules in the heart, when once it meets with any obstruction. A proud man is carried away by whatever affects his vanity or his ambition; a miser is excited when any thing disturbs his schemes for making money, and a voluptuous man is angry when his pleasures are broken in upon. This anger is neither according to God, nor to good sense; it causes confusion and trouble in the soul, and the disorder to which it gives rise within is visible on the face, and in the whole demeanor of the person giving way to it; his eyes are inflamed, his voice obstructed, his whole body trembles—he no longer knows himself, nor respects any thing: thence the abuse which he heaps on the objects of his wrath; the venom which flows in torrents from his mouth; the most atrocious slander, the blackest calumny, are all made use of by him; thence the imprecations which he utters against himself,

and at times, even the most horrible blasphemy against every thing holy; nothing is sacred for that impious tongue. He is soon carried to the most outrageous excess of violence, and the most revolting cruelty scarcely suffices to satisfy his vengeance, or allay his rage. Such, then, are the terrible effects of this fatal passion. We must, therefore, accustom ourselves early to overcome and keep down its first motions in our heart, and exercise ourselves in Christian mildness.

This virtue makes us bear, for God's sake, all manner of contradiction; it represses all the emotions and sallies of anger, and enables us to refrain from showing any symptom of impatience or of bitterness,—from allowing any expression of contempt or of complaint to escape us,—it causes one to have a serene and modest look, enables us to bear with the caprice and ill-humour of others, and to win them over by our mildness.

EXAMPLE.—Ruffin relates that a solitary, feeling himself tempted to anger in his monastery, said within himself: “I will go into the desert, so that having no one with whom to quarrel, I may have no occasion for anger.” So he withdrew into the desert, and took up his abode in a cavern. One day when he was congratulating himself on having escaped from the occasions of anger, it chanced that his pitcher which he had filled with water, had been upset three times in succession, by his own want of precaution; this irritated him so much that he laid hold of the pitcher and broke it in a fit of vexation. Entering immediately into himself, he said: “The demon of anger has deceived me; for, although I am alone, he still overcomes me; since then our passions go with us every where, and are every where to be combatted, I will return to my monastery.”

Lives of the Fathers of the Desert.

ARTICLE VII.

OF SLOTH.

SLOTH is a sluggish dulness and a wilful disgust of labour, which leads one to neglect every duty rather than

be disturbed. There are no sins, no disorders to which idleness does not lead, because it throws the soul into a state of numbness and feebleness whereby it is prevented from resisting its evil propensities: hence idleness is called the mother of every vice. Its most immediate offspring is: first, indolence and loss of time; the indolent pass days, months, and years in doing nothing, or in frivolous amusements; they think not of fulfilling the duties of Religion; prayer is either entirely omitted, or badly said; the Sacraments are either abandoned altogether, or received without due preparation. Nor do they acquit themselves better of the duties of their state: a young man, for instance, profits nothing from the education given him, doing nothing of what is prescribed for him to do, or doing it in an imperfect manner, without attention, without application; consequently his mind remains uncultivated, his memory unexercised, and he leaves the house of education almost as ignorant as when he first became its inmate. What follows? If he is given any important office, requiring intelligence and extensive information, he is unable to fulfil its duties—his ignorance is perceived, his deficiency speedily found out, and he falls into contempt. How great is then his regret for having lost the time of his youth!—vain, vain regret!—it is too late, that loss is irreparable.

The second vice which springs from idleness is pusillanimity, or faint-heartedness. The indolent have no strength to undertake even the easiest things; they are stopped by the most trifling obstacle, and every thing appears impossible, because they will make no effort. "Wo!" says the Scripture, "to those who are faint of heart!" Idleness also produces fickleness. If it happens that they conceive any desire of correcting themselves, that desire is feeble, and does not last long; they are soon fatigued, and fall back into their original slothfulness. "The idle are killed by desire," says the Holy Ghost, "they will and do not will; to-day they will one thing, to-morrow another; to-day they will do well, and to-morrow they change their mind." Hence that cold "indifference which accompanies all their actions, being a lassitude of the heart which leaves no taste for the fulfilment of duty; hence, in fine, that in-

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sensibility which renders him deaf to the remonstrances and exhortations of those who would arouse him from his lethargy; nothing animates, nothing affects him—neither the reproaches which he draws upon him, nor the good example of so many others! How much of sin there is in a slothful, indolent soul! The Scripture likens it to a deserted and uncultivated spot of ground. "I passed," says the sacred writer, "by the field of the sluggard, and it was full of weeds; thorns covered the ground; and the fence which should have surrounded it was broken down." Again, listen to the words addressed to the slothful by God himself, in the book of Proverbs: "Go to the ant, oh sluggard! consider its ways, and learn of it to be wise; for, although it has neither chief to conduct, nor master to instruct it, yet has it care to make provision during summer, and to pick up in the harvest wherewith to support itself. But thou, how long wilt thou sleep? when wilt thou awake from thy slumber? If thou arise not from thy lethargy, want shall come upon thee, and overwhelm thee!" Beg of God the virtue opposed to idleness, that is to say, a holy activity, which makes us love our duties, and renders us prompt in their fulfilment, with a view to acquit ourselves of them for our own salvation. Let us never be discouraged by the difficulties of our lot; if we only have good courage God will soon render easy and smooth all that at first appeared hard and irksome; it is He who has imposed upon us the necessity of labour, and He will help us to practise what He has commanded us to do. Be assured that the lassitude which attends on idleness is a thousand times more insupportable than the most laborious employment.

EXAMPLES.—"Go to the ant—consider her ways, and learn wisdom of her!" This advice of Solomon was often quoted by a certain director of souls, when addressing his people. "This life is the harvest time, and lay in now a provision of good works that may purchase heaven for you hereafter. Sluggard, how long wilt thou sleep?"

—A certain holy man used to say every time he heard the clock strike: "Oh my God! another hour of my life has passed away, and I must render an account of it, as of every moment of my life."

DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN

PART SECOND.

OF THE SACRAMENTS AND OF PRAYER.

INTRODUCTION

ON THE NECESSITY OF GRACE AND THE MEANS OF
OBTAINING IT.

WE stand in need of grace, in order to accomplish the will of God, and save our own souls. Without that divine assistance we could do nothing in the order of salvation, and this we are taught by our Lord himself, in these words: "Without me you can do nothing;" and by St. Paul, as follows: "Of ourselves we are not able to have any good thought; but it is God who enables us." Grace is a supernatural gift which God bestows upon us through His great mercy, and in consideration of the merits of Christ. Grace is of two kinds: 1st, the sanctifying grace, whereby we are justified, that is to say, by which we pass from the state of mortal sin to that of justice or righteousness; it makes us children of God, pleasing in his sight, and heirs to the kingdom of heaven: this grace is said to be *habitual*, when we preserve it by shunning mortal sin. 2d. Actual grace, which consists in a holy thought enlightening the mind, and in a good inclination, which excites and assists us when our will is to do good. Original sin having cast a thick darkness over the mind, and a profound corruption into the heart, we are consequently born in ignorance, and with a strong tendency to evil, which is called concupiscence; these are the two great sources of all our sins; for we only sin because we are ignorant of our duty, or that, knowing it, we prefer following our own evil propensities. We could never free ourselves from the state of sin, nor do good, if God did not open the eyes of our understanding, and imprint on our heart a leaning towards virtue. Grace enables us to know what is good, inspiring us with the desire, and giving us the strength to practise it. What would become of man, attacked as he is on all sides—without and within—

If God did not assist him in his weakness, seeing that his natural tendency to evil is joined by the temptations of the world and of the devil? How many snares are spread around his path! The world seeks to dazzle his eyes by the display of its illusive* pomps and glittering baubles, in order to fix his heart, and turn it away from God. The devil, on the other hand, incessantly attacks him, presenting to his view all manner of seducing objects, exciting his imagination by a thousand fancies, and ever exciting the flesh to revolt against the spirit. No, he could never resist so many assaults if God ceased, a single moment, to sustain him. Hence it is, that in daily reciting the Lord's prayer, we beg of God that his name may be sanctified, that his will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, that he give us not over to temptation, and that he may deliver us from evil.

It is then true, according to the doctrine of Jesus Christ, that we can neither glorify the name of God, nor do his will, nor resist temptation, nor shun the snares of the evil spirit, but by the assistance of God, but with grace we can do all things, according to the same apostle: "I can do all through Him who strengthens me." Yet this help is not due to us, otherwise it would be no longer a grace; we have no right to it, God bestowing it upon us in his pure kindness, and by virtue of the merits of the passion and death of Christ. This grace is refused to none, so that it is our own fault when we do not profit by it to do good and save our souls. It is not grace that fails us, it is we who are deficient. God has attached it to the Sacraments when they are received with proper dispositions; he has promised it to prayer, when duly made; so that we have two infallible means of obtaining grace,—and these are the Sacraments and prayer.

Sanctifying grace is received through the channels of Baptism and of Penance, instituted by Christ for that purpose, and which, by that institution, are become necessary means of sanctification. In the second place, God has promised to hear us when we address him by prayer, when we beg the assistance of his grace, and solicit his mercy in the name of his only Son, who has loved us even unto

death. We may, therefore, draw down upon ourselves the grace of God, and, with His powerful aid, we shall be enabled to keep his commandments; for God commands nothing impossible, but only enjoins us to do what we can, and to ask for what we cannot do, to the end that He may assist us by his grace; God never abandons those whom He has once justified by His grace, if they do not first abandon Him; nor ever ceases to protect those who cease not to be faithful to him.

EXAMPLE.—St. Augustine resisted grace when, being pressed to return from the ways of sin, he said to God: "Lord give me a little more time—yet a little while; soon—soon;—to-morrow, to-morrow!" But having heard of the conversion of two of the emperor's officers, who had renounced the world merely from reading the life of St. Anthony, and having besides, heard a voice saying: "Take and read—take and read!" He took the Epistles of St. Paul, and read these words: "Live not in chambering and impurity!" He said to himself: "How long shall I hesitate? How long shall I put off from day to day? Why not at once?—why not draw myself, even this very moment, from the slough of infamy and guilt?" Augustine then co-operated with grace, and he felt what one of the officers had been known to say: "It costs much less to be a friend of God, than to obtain a brilliant fortune, and the favour of the emperor. It is only necessary to will it, and I shall instantly become what I wish to be."

LASACQUE.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL.

JESUS CHRIST has instituted the Sacraments, that is to say, sensible signs to which he has been pleased to join the inestimable gift of justification the Sacraments are then, as it were, so many channels by which he communicates to us his saving grace.

The Sacraments are signs, since they make known to us

an invisible grace which they operate in the soul, and they are sensible because they fall under the observation of our senses.

There are seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. In the Sacraments there are two things, viz: that which we see, and that which we do not see, but only believe. What we see, is the external action of the minister; what we do not see, is the invisible operation of grace.

Three things are necessary to constitute a sacrament: the matter, the form, and the intention of doing as the Church does.

The things used in the administration of the Sacraments are the matter, as the words are the form. These two exterior things have between them the most intimate connexion, as they have with the grace which they communicate; for instance, in baptism, the matter is water; the form consists in these words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"—that is to say, "I wash you," and the effect of baptism is to purify by giving a new life. The matter of Confirmation consists in the imposition of hands, the oil, and the holy chrism; the form is in the words which accompany these two actions, and by which the bishop prays the Holy Ghost to fill the soul with strength and grace; and the effect of this sacrament is to strengthen and to make the soul flourish in its spiritual life. So the Eucharist, of which the matter is bread and wine, imparts spiritual nourishment; penance heals the wounds of the soul; and Extreme Unction delivers us from the lingering weakness caused by sin. Holy Orders provide the Church with the ministers by whom she is governed, and the sacrament of marriage gives her children, who renew and perpetuate her duration.

All the sacraments have been instituted for our sanctification, and have all the same effect; but there are distinctions between them which must be remarked. Firstly, Baptism and Penance are established to impart the spiritual life of grace, and hence it is that they are called the sacraments of the dead. The others are to increase in us that spiritual life thus bestowed, and they are accordingly

named sacraments of the living, seeing that in order to receive them worthily, we must live the life of grace, which means being free from mortal sin.

Secondly, there are three, viz. : Baptism, Confirmation, and Holy Orders, whereby the soul is not only sanctified through grace, but it is also stamped with an indelible mark, consecrating it to God, in an especial manner. They who receive these sacraments with bad dispositions do not receive the sanctifying grace, but their souls are stamped with that ineffaceable mark. Moreover, even when grace is received, it may be destroyed by sin, but the divine seal, imprinted by these sacraments, can never be erased, and hence it is that neither of these three sacraments can be administered a second time to the same person.

Besides the action and the words which are essential to each sacrament, the Church, ever guided by the Holy Spirit, has added several ceremonies for the instruction and edification of the faithful. Although these ceremonies are not absolutely necessary for producing the effect of the sacraments, yet they are not the less worthy of respect, by reason of their antiquity; the greater part of them appearing to have been established by the apostles themselves. These ceremonies serve to make us better acquainted with the excellence and the sanctity of the sacraments; they make known to us, in a sensible manner, the dispositions with which we ought to receive them, the effects which they produce, and the obligations they impose upon us.

EXAMPLE.—A zealous priest once said, in a tone of deep sorrow : “ Alas ! how many invalids do we behold crowding, during the summer months, to the waters of Bourbon, of Vichi, of Bareges, &c. They spare no expense to cure any of their bodily infirmities, if a cure is at all possible. Now, we have, in the sacraments, admirable remedies for all the wounds and diseases of the soul. These sources of grace infallibly heal all who apply to them with proper dispositions—how is it then that so many sinners neglect to approach, or draw water from these life-giving fountains ?—and how is it, too, that so few of those who do come, bring with them the necessary dispositions ? ”

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CHAPTER II.

OF BAPTISM.

ARTICLE I.

ON THE NECESSITY OF BAPTISM.

BAPTISM is a sacrament which effaces original sin, and makes us children of God and of the Church.

It is the first of all the sacraments, and gives power to participate in the others. It was instituted by our Lord, when he said to his apostles : " Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : all those who believe and are baptized shall be saved." These words are the form of Baptism, and common water is its matter.

It is, therefore, to save men that Jesus Christ has instituted baptism ; it is to deliver them from sin, and from eternal death, which is the penalty of sin, and to render them, by a second birth, children of God and of the Church. Baptism remits original sin in children, and in adults it also effaces the actual sin they may have committed from the time they attained the use of reason, provided they have the necessary dispositions ; baptism also remits the penalty due to these sins, and hence it is that the Church has never imposed satisfaction or penance on the newly-baptized ; but it does not remove the effects of original sin, which are ignorance, concupiscence, the miseries of life, and the certainty of death. God leaves with us these consequences of original sin even after it has been effaced, to the end that they may serve to exercise our virtue by the combats we have to sustain, in order to avoid evil and do good. If we were delivered by baptism from ignorance and the propensity to evil, we should do good without any trouble to ourselves, as it were naturally ; and thence we should have no other merit than that of corresponding with grace, since the practice of virtue would cost us nothing. Baptism stamps upon the soul a spiritual and indelible character, which consecrates it to God, and dis-

tinguishes the baptized from all others. This is the reason why we can receive baptism only once, seeing that what is once consecrated to God belongs ever after to Him by an inalienable right.

Baptism is so necessary that we cannot be saved without it, conformably to the words of Jesus Christ: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." But it may be supplied, either by martyrdom or by desire, and hence it is that baptism is considered as of three kinds: baptism by water, baptism by desire, and baptism by blood. Nevertheless it is only baptism by water that is a real sacrament, and though the name of baptism is given to the others, it is only because they supply the want of that sacrament, when it cannot be received, and because they have the same effect. This sacrament is styled *baptism by water* because of its being given with water.

The second is called baptism by desire, or by tears, because it consists in a true and sincere regret for one's sins, accompanied by a great love for God, and an ardent desire to be baptized; it is also called the baptism of the Holy Ghost, because it is through the Holy Ghost that one immediately receives the grace of this sacrament, when, without being able to obtain baptism, one dies with a sincere contrition for their sins.

The baptism of blood consists in suffering martyrdom for the love of God and for the faith of Christ Jesus, ere yet one has been baptized; it is named thus, because he who dies in defence of the faith is considered as baptized in his own blood; and because he receives the same grace that he would have received by the baptism in water, and even more perfectly, because martyrdom represents, in a more natural manner, the death of Jesus Christ, from which this sacrament derives its virtue and its efficacy.

EXAMPLE.—"I knew a virtuous woman," says the pious Boudon, "who, although very poor as regarded the goods of this world, was rich in the sight of Heaven, being full of the spirit of Jesus Christ, and a tender affection for the Blessed Virgin. There was a magnificent church in course of erection in the city where she dwelt, and she wanted to

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give a crown-piece, the fruit of her savings, towards the expense of the building. The priest, however, to whom she made her offering, refused to receive it, saying that he would much rather give her some assistance than take any thing from her, for he saw, by her clothes, that she was very poor indeed. The woman replied, with admirable faith: "I poor, father!—why, am I not a Christian—the daughter of a mighty king, and heiress of a great kingdom?"

Month of Mary, by Father Debussi.

ARTICLE II.

THE MINISTER OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

BAPTISM being, as it is, necessary for salvation, Jesus Christ, in instituting it, has given to men all imaginable facilities for its reception; hence it is that although in ordinary cases it is only priests who have the right of baptizing, and that children must be taken to the church to receive the sacrament, with all the usual ceremonies, yet any one may baptize in case of necessity, and the baptism is valid, provided that common water be poured upon the head of the person baptized, at the same time pronouncing these words: "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." In order that the baptism be duly administered, the water must really touch some considerable part of the body, otherwise the baptism must be considered as doubtful, and the child is to be again baptized if opportunity offers.

This ought also to be done if it is doubtful whether the child has life, or whether it was previously baptized, or if the baptism was valid, or in any other extraordinary case; the form then is, while pouring on the water: "If you can receive baptism, or have not been baptized, I baptize you, &c."

Baptism being absolutely necessary for all men, it is obligatory on those who are converted to the Catholic faith, having the use of reason, to receive this sacrament; but the practice of the church, with regard to them, has been always very different from her treatment of infants. These

latter being incapable of receiving instruction, she admits them to baptism without any disposition, because they could not possibly have any; but she acts in a different manner with those who have attained the use of reason. They are first instructed in the sacred mysteries, and in all that it is necessary to know of our holy religion; they are admonished not to present themselves for baptism without having the purest intentions, with a heart entirely free from affection to sin, and they are exhorted to do penance for the sins they have already committed. In former times, baptism was only administered to adults twice in the year, on the vigils of Easter and of Pentecost, unless that some one was in danger of death, and it was for that reason that the water for baptism was blessed on those days.

EXAMPLE.—A certain missionary was going about in a remote region of the New World, seeking to win over souls to Christ. One day a savage presented himself before him, who appeared to have extraordinary dispositions. As soon as this man had become acquainted with the sacred mysteries, and what relates to the sacraments, the priest baptized him, and gave him the Holy Eucharist, which he received with transports of love and of gratitude. The missionary then went on his way, and a year passed away before he returned to that same place. As soon as the savage heard of the return of him whom he regarded as his father, he hastened to meet him, and entreated him to give him once more the holy communion. "Yes, my son!" said he, "but you must first confess all the mortal sins you may have committed since your baptism: be not afraid, I will help you to accuse yourself." "How, father?" replied the savage, with astonishment, "are there then Christians who after being baptized, and having received the body of Christ, would outrage Him by committing mortal sin? Thanks be to God, I do not find myself guilty of any such sins!" And he burst into tears while accusing himself of some trifling faults. The priest was struck with admiration, and blessed God, seeing thus that he was served and honoured by faithful and fervent souls even amongst the uncivilized children of the forest.

Edifying Letters.

ARTICLE III.

OF THE CEREMONIES OF BAPTISM.

AS BAPTISM is the first and most necessary of all the sacraments, the Church ordains that it is to be administered with a great number of ceremonies, in order to set forth the excellence of the sacrament, and the obligations incurred in receiving it. The sign of the cross is very often made in administering baptism, to show that this sacrament derives all its value from the cross of Christ, and to signify that the life of a Christian is a life of crosses and sufferings, and that he is to walk ever in the footsteps of Christ. Several unctions are also made, either of the holy oil or the sacred chrism, to denote the interior unction of grace which the Holy Ghost infuses into the soul of the baptized person, and that, as oil penetrates the body, strengthens it and heals its wounds, so does the grace received in baptism penetrate the heart and fortify it against the passions.

The person awaiting baptism remains at first at the entrance of the church, to indicate that, being the slave of the devil, he has no right to go farther into the house of God, because of the original sin wherewith he is sullied.

There he is exorcised and questioned on the principal mysteries of faith.

The priest afterwards makes several unctions, recites prayers, puts salt in the mouth of the child, and touches its ears with spittle, to denote that he is about to communicate to it the spirit of wisdom and of understanding. He then asks it whether it believes in God the Father Almighty, in Jesus Christ his only Son, and in the Holy Ghost.

Then, having asked the child if it will be baptized, and having received an affirmative answer from the godfather and godmother, he baptizes it by the name of some particular saint, so as to give it a protector in heaven, and a model for the life it ought to lead on earth. Having baptized the child, the priest places on its head a white cloth, and in its hand a lighted taper, to indicate the purity which it has received, and that it is ever to walk by the light of faith, and to be animated by the fire of charity. He then inscribes

its name on the parish registry, showing that it is now numbered amongst the children of God.

The sponsors at the baptismal font are named godfather and godmother; they are, as it were, security before God, for the baptized, that he will faithfully acquit himself of the obligations of his baptism, and they engage to instruct him in the duties of a Christian, and, as far as they can, to make him put them in practice.

The obligation of godfather or godmother is so great towards the child for whom they have answered at the font, that if the father and mother or other relatives fail to instruct it, they are strictly obliged to supply the deficiency.

EXAMPLE.—Great festivities were going forward in Rome, and the emperor, Dioclesian, was there in person. The comedian, Genes, thought he could not better divert the court than by a mock representation of the ceremonies of baptism. He appeared, lying on the stage as though he were sick, and demanded to be baptized so that he might die in peace. Two other comedians then entered, one attired as a priest, and the other as an exorcist. Approaching the bed, they said to Genes: "My child, why hast thou summoned us hither?" Instantly the heart of Genes was changed, and he answered, seriously: "Because I wish to receive the grace of Jesus Christ, and by holy regeneration obtain the remission of my sins." But this reply was only received as in the most perfect keeping with the part he had to play. The ceremonies of baptism were regularly gone through, and when it was time to cover the baptized with the white robe, the soldiers, in order to carry on the farce, presented him to the emperor to be examined like the martyrs. Genes then spoke out with all his easy fluency of speech, and from the elevated position which he occupied, addressed all present in an inspired tone: "Give ear, emperor, courtiers, senators, plebeians, and all the order of imperial Rome, hearken unto me: heretofore, when merely heard the name of Jesus Christ pronounced, I shuddered with horror, and persecuted as far as lay in my power all who professed a belief in Him; I regarded with unmixed hatred such of my neighbours, or fellow actors as became

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Christians, and I detested their religion so much that I made myself acquainted with its mysteries, as ye have all seen, to the end that I might publicly turn them into ridicule; but at the moment when the baptismal water touched my flesh, my heart was totally changed, and the replies which I gave to the subsequent interrogatories were perfectly sincere;—I answered just as I believed. I saw a hand extended from the highest heavens, and radiant angels hovering above me. I saw them read in a terrible book all the sins I have committed from my infancy up, but immediately after they wiped them out, and showed me the book whiter than snow. You now, then, great emperor! and ye, spectators of all classes, whom our sacrilegious sports have caused to laugh at these divine mysteries, believe, all of you, with me, who are more guilty than any amongst you,—believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord, worthy of all homage and adoration, and thus try to obtain mercy from Him!”

The emperor Dioclesian, equally surprised and irritated, instantly caused Genes to be beaten with a stick, and sent him then to the prefect, Plautien, so as that he might be made to sacrifice to the gods. The prefect employed every means of torture, but all in vain. Genes constantly replied: “There is no master like unto Him whom I have seen; and I adore him and love him with all my heart and soul; had I a thousand lives to lose, nothing could separate me from him, no torment can force Jesus from my heart and from my lips: I bitterly deplore my past transgressions, and that I have begun so late to serve him!” It was observed that his eloquence made an impression on his listeners; and, fearful of its effect, they hastened to cut off his head.

It must, however, be remarked that a ceremony so impiously performed, could only be for St. Genes a baptism of salvation by an especial and miraculous act of grace, by which God excited in the heart of the saint a true and sincere contrition for his sins.

ARTICLE IV.

ON THE BAPTISMAL VOWS.

WHEN presented to the Church to receive the holy baptism, we were asked if we believed in God, if we would live according to the precepts of the Gospel, and if we renounced with all our heart the devil and his pomps—the world and its maxims; and it was only when a formal and affirmative answer had been returned, that we were admitted amongst the children of God.

It was, therefore, in the face of heaven and earth, in the presence of God and his holy angels, that we promised to obey the law of Christ, and to practise it in its fullest extent. It is true we had not the use of reason at the time of our baptism; but it was for us and in our name that these promises were made; we have since ratified them as often as we made a public profession of Christianity; we also confirmed them every day by making on ourselves the sign of the cross, by reciting the Lord's prayer, assisting at the holy sacrifice of the mass, and by participating in the sacraments. We are not, therefore, our own property, but belong to God,—our soul, our body, and all are his. To follow the maxims of the world, to seek after its vanities, to love the pomps of the devil, to be ashamed of the Gospel, would be to renounce the character of a Christian, violate our engagements, become prevaricators, trample on the blood of Jesus Christ, outrage the Holy Ghost, and shamefully to expel him from our hearts. Let us, then, never forget that these vows are written in the book of Life, that God has account of them in heaven, and that we shall be judged by them at the hour of death. On our fidelity in fulfilling them depends our salvation and our eternal destiny. In order to keep them in our minds we ought often to renew them, and incessantly to thank the Lord for having snatched us from the thraldom of the Evil One, and called us to the kingdom of his Son.

EXAMPLE.—We read in the history of the Church that a holy deacon, named Murrita, having answered at the sacred

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font for a young man named Elpiphodorus, had the misfortune to see him become an apostate and a persecutor of the Christians. One day, when he was publicly tormenting some Christians in the midst of an immense crowd, the holy deacon suddenly appeared; he had preserved the white robe wherewith Elpiphodorus had been covered at his baptism, and presenting it to him, he cried out in a loud voice: "Behold the witness of thine apostacy; this will bear testimony against thee at the judgment seat of God. Look upon this white garment wherewith I clothed thee at the sacred font; it will call out for vengeance upon thee, and it shall be changed into a robe of fire and flame to burn thee for all eternity." The spectators were moved to tears by this address, and Elpiphodorus withdrew, covered with confusion.

History of the Church.

CHAPTER III.

OF CONFIRMATION.

ARTICLE I.

ON THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION, which is the second of the Sacraments, increases within us the grace of Baptism, and makes us perfect Christians by imparting to us the Holy Ghost, with all the abundance of his graces. This Sacrament completes what was begun by Baptism, or which it is the perfection. The grace of Baptism is one of regeneration which makes us children of God; that of Confirmation is a grace of strength and of courage which elevates us to the dignity of a perfect man, and renders us capable of fighting and overcoming in bearing testimony to Jesus Christ, even at the expense of our own life. This effect we see in the person of each of the Apostles. Before the descent of the Holy Ghost they were weak and timid; but no sooner were they filled with his grace than they became, as it were, other men, and pronounced Jesus Christ with intrepid courage. The Holy

Ghost still descends on those who receive confirmation, and he produces in them the same effects, but in an invisible manner, because religion is now so well established that it must be practised without the aid of miracles.

Although the Holy Ghost does not descend visibly on those who are confirmed, as it often happened in the primitive Church, yet he always pours upon them the plenitude of his gifts and graces. Seven principal gifts are attributed to the Holy Ghost,—that of Wisdom, which enables us to taste of the things of God;—that of Intelligence, which gives us to understand the truths of religion;—that of Counsel, which makes us walk in the way of salvation;—Science, or Knowledge, which enables us to discern good from evil;—Fortitude, which gives us strength to repulse the obstacles that may oppose our salvation;—Piety, which makes us steadily fulfil our duties towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves;—and finally, that of the Fear of God, which impresses on the soul a great respect for the divine Majesty everywhere present.

The fruits of the Holy Ghost are: Charity, which unites us to God by love; Joy, which fills us with a holy consolation; Peace, which produces tranquillity amid all the tumult of the world; Patience, which enables us to bear annoyance and opposition for God's sake; Benignity, which prompts us to relieve the wants of our neighbour; Goodness, which renders us beneficent to all; Longanimity, which prevents us from being disturbed by the various trials of life; Meekness, which induces us to bear with the failings of others; Faith, which enables us to believe with firmness and certainty; modesty, whereby our exterior is regulated according to the maxims of the Gospel; Continence and Chastity, which preserve our bodies in that state of purity which becomes the temples of the Holy Ghost.

Bishops, as being the successors of the Apostles, are the usual ministers of Confirmation. The ceremonies which accompany the administration of this Sacrament, are so many outward signs of the admirable effects which it produces in the soul.

The bishop, turning towards those who are to be confirmed, extends his hands over them, to indicate that the

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Holy Ghost takes them under his protection, and is about to fill them with his grace. He then recites a prayer, invoking the Holy Ghost, and imploring him to replenish with his gifts those who are to be confirmed. He next takes the holy chrism, and applies it to the forehead of each, saying: "I mark you with the sign of the cross, and I confirm you with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This prayer, with that which accompanies the imposition of hands, constitutes the form of Confirmation, teaching us at the same time how precious are the effects produced by this Sacrament in the souls of those who worthily receive it.

The holy chrism, composed of oil of olives and balsam, is well adapted to make known to us the abundance, the sweetness, and the strength of the grace which then fills the soul, penetrating and strengthening it, even as oil penetrates and strengthens the body; balsam is also a symbol of the good odor of Jesus Christ, which the confirmed should give forth by the practice of every virtue.

The imposition of hands and the unction with the holy chrism, being the matter of Confirmation, are equally necessary to the validity of that Sacrament.

Although this Sacrament is not absolutely necessary for salvation, still any one neglecting to receive it, is guilty of a considerable fault; they deprive themselves of the abundant graces it communicates, and, moreover, disobey Jesus Christ, who has instituted it for our advancement in the life of grace.

EXAMPLE.—Julian, the apostate, made up his mind to the public profession of impiety and infidelity. For that purpose he caused great preparations to be made for sacrificing to the idols in a temple dedicated to the demon. He went there in person with all his court, so as to give all possible splendour to the impious ceremony. All being ready, the emperor made a sign for commencing. But what was the astonishment of the priests when they found themselves totally unable to proceed with the abominable ceremony! Moreover, they found that their knives, which they had carefully prepared, could not penetrate the flesh of the

victim, and that the fire which they had kindled on the altar was suddenly extinguished. The sacrificer exclaimed: "There is certainly some great invisible power obstructing our ceremonies!" And he entreated the emperor to have a search made, for that there must be amongst the assistants some Galilean, either newly washed with water, or anointed with oil—(meaning baptized or confirmed.) There was, indeed, in the temple a young page who was a Christian, and had been confirmed but a few days before. The emperor having called out: "Let the search be made!" the page instantly stepped forward and said, "Learn that I am a Christian, lately anointed with oil, to animate me for the combat. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, who redeemed me by his cross; Him do I acknowledge as my God, and I glory in belonging to him. It is I, or rather the God whom I serve, who has put a stop to these impious ceremonies. I have invoked the sacred name of Christ, and therefore the devils could not in my presence be worshipped as gods. At the name of Jesus, who is the true God, they were forced to quit the place." The emperor, who had once been a Christian, and well instructed in the power of Christ the Lord, was instantly struck with terror. He dreaded the effects of the divine vengeance, and covered with confusion, he quitted the temple without uttering a word. The courageous soldier of Jesus Christ went to tell the Christians of what had happened; they returned thanks to God, and recognized how terrible to the demons are those who have received the grace of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Ecclesiastical History,

ARTICLE II.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS NECESSARY FOR CONFIRMATION.

As CONFIRMATION can be received but once, it is of great importance to bring to its reception the necessary dispositions, in order to obtain all the graces peculiar to that Sacrament.

The first disposition necessary for receiving Confirmation, is to be properly instructed in the mysteries of Faith, and

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to renew the profession of our belief; it is, therefore, necessary to know the Creed, and to thoroughly understand its meaning, as well as what regards the Sacraments, the Commandments, grace and prayer. And if, on some occasions, young children are admitted, although they are scarcely able to comprehend these matters, their admission is a pure indulgence, on account of their innocence and tender age. When receiving a Sacrament, we cannot be too well instructed, and we expose ourselves to great danger when, through our own fault, we are deficient in understanding.

The second disposition is, to have the conscience purged of all mortal sin; this preparation is, perhaps, even more necessary than the first, and can in no case be dispensed with: the Holy Ghost himself assures us in the Scripture, that "Wisdom shall not enter a soul that is ill-disposed, nor dwell in a body subject to sin." Confirmation is a Sacrament of the living, and consequently spiritual life is supposed to exist in the soul which receives it; its effect is to increase that spiritual life, and if it were previously dead, how could it be fortified or strengthened? In order, then, to be confirmed, one must either have retained their baptismal innocence, or recovered it by a true penance. Finally, the third disposition is an ardent desire of receiving the Holy Ghost with the abundance of his graces. It was by this holy desire and by fervent prayer that the Apostles prepared themselves for the coming of the Holy Ghost; and it is by imitating their fervor that we shall draw him down to dwell in our souls. This grace should be sought with fervor and perseverance, for God, who is all goodness, is ever ready to impart it to us.

EXAMPLE.—The disciples, being dispersed by the persecution which arose in Jerusalem after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, St. Phillip, one of the seven deacons, went to Samaria, and having converted and baptized a great number of persons, he sent word to the Apostles, who deputed St. Peter and St. John to impose hands on the new converts, and the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon them.

Acts, 8th chap.

ARTICLE III.

ON THE OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED BY CONFIRMATION.

CONFIRMATION imposes upon us two principal obligations; the first is that of confessing the faith of Jesus Christ even at the peril of our life: and the second is, never to blush for the Gospel, and to brave human respect. A confirmed Christian is obliged to defend the faith when unbelievers attack it in its dogmas, or libertines assail its morality. He must bear testimony unto Jesus Christ; that is to say, he must courageously defend the faith that he has taught us,—arise at once against those by whom it is attacked, fearing neither raillery nor the threats of men, nor even death itself. The terrible punishment wherewith Jesus, in the Gospel, threatens those who fail to perform this duty, ought to show us how indispensable it is. “Whosoever,” says our Lord, “shall recognize me before men, him shall I also recognize before my Father who is in heaven; and whosoever shall deny me before men, him shall I also deny before my Father.” It is, therefore, a crime not to confess Jesus Christ before men, and not to stand up in his defence when he is outraged and abused. Let us, then, oppose a courage worthy of the soldiers of Christ, to the dangerous discourse of corrupt men who would shake our faith; and let us maintain the cause of our Master with all possible zeal. Would we permit any one, in our presence, to tear the reputation of a father, or a friend? How then can we suffer any one to outrage before us the God who has given us life,—he who is our first, our real father, and who is to be our eternal reward? It is above all by the purity of our morals, and the regularity of our life that we are to confess Jesus Christ, and to win over to Him, if it be possible, those who oppose his doctrine. Example is much more persuasive than words, and nothing is more honourable to our holy religion than a Christian and virtuous life.

The bishop, in administering Confirmation, makes the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the person confirmed, and gives him a slight blow, to teach him that he ought never to be ashamed of practising the law of Christ—that

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he jugat to be superior to human respect, and that weakness, so unworthy of a Christian, which hinders him from doing good, and prompts him to do evil rather than displease the wicked. A young man, for instance, dares not frequent the Sacraments, sanctify the festivals, assist at mass, or observe the days of abstinence, because he fears to be laughed at by his companions who pursue an opposite course; he sees that by fulfilling his duties, he will become the object of their raillery, and that is quite sufficient to make him do as they do! How insulting is such conduct towards God!—how fatal are its effects, and how unreasonable it is! and what an outrage does it offer to God, when one fears less to lose his friendship than that of men, and such men as they are!—perverse and wicked men, who merit neither esteem nor confidence, but who are really worthy of contempt! What! on the one side God decrees that we should preserve piety in our hearts by the frequent use of those means established by himself for our sanctification; and because certain young libertines choose to scoff, and to abandon the Lord and his worship, we are to be ashamed of obeying his precepts!—What cowardice! Shall we fear rather to fall into disgrace with the impious than with our God? What a crime it is to prefer the creature to the Creator! If God be for us, what have we to apprehend from them? If God be against us, what assistance can they give us? When we perish, can they save us? When God will condemn us, shall they be able to defend us? What! we blush for our fidelity in the fulfilment of our duty! But is not that, on the contrary, our real and true glory?—When has virtue become the cause of confusion and disgrace?—What a total perversion of ideas is this!—How opposed to the teaching of reason, and to all our natural feelings!—It is vice which ought to be ashamed, and not virtue; it is to guilt that shame belongs, and not to innocence. Who, after all, are these censors of virtue—these men whose displeasure is so much dreaded, and whose good opinion so eagerly sought? They are, for the most part, men who are given up to their brutal passions, and who writhe under that shameful yoke, a secret uneasiness goes with them everywhere, empoisoning every moment of

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their lives; they are continually torn with the most cruel remorse; tormented by the reproaches of their own conscience; they would stifle that importunate voice; and it is to find some security in the number of their accomplices that they endeavour to draw others into sin. Yet whilst they outwardly inveigh against virtue, they cannot but respect it in their heart, and bewail their own want of it; and they persecute the just, while in reality they esteem them and envy their lot, and if they had a precious deposit to confide, it is to them they would assuredly give it.

EXAMPLE.—An officer, distinguished by his birth and by his wealth, was on the point of obtaining a vacant post of considerable importance, but he was accused of being a Christian, and his religion excluded him from all honours and offices. The governor gave him some hours to reflect on what he would do. During that time he was visited by the bishop, who, taking him by the hand, led him to the church, and made him enter the sanctuary. Having reached the foot of the altar, he pointed to the sword which hung at the side, and at the same time presented to him the book of the holy Gospels, telling him to choose between one and the other. The officer, without a moment's hesitation, extended his right hand, and took the sacred volume. "Attach yourself, then, to God," said the bishop; "He will strengthen you, and grant you that which you have chosen. Go in peace!" On leaving the church, the officer presented himself before the governor, and having generously confessed the faith of Christ, he was condemned to death, and expired in great torment.

MÉRAULT

CHAPTER IV

OF THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

ARTICLE I.

ON THE NATURE, FORM AND NECESSITY OF PENANCE.

PENANCE is a Sacrament which remits the sins committed after Baptism, howsoever great or numerous they may

be, provided that the sinner accuses himself of them with proper dispositions. This Sacrament was instituted by Jesus Christ, when, after his resurrection, he breathed on his apostles, and said to them: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whose sins ye retain, they are retained!"

The form of this Sacrament consists in these words of the priest, who is the minister of Penance: "I absolve you, in the name of the Father," &c.; and the matter in those sins committed after Baptism. The three acts of the penitent, namely, Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction, must accompany the Absolution, otherwise the Sacrament is null and void for the remission of sin; and, moreover, a sacrilege is committed.

Whoever, then, is guilty of mortal sin, can only obtain a remission thereof, either by means of this Sacrament, or an act of perfect contrition, including the ardent desire of receiving it. Let no one say: "I do penance in private,—I do penance before God!"—"That is not sufficient," says St. Augustine; "recourse must be had to the Sacrament." As sins committed before Baptism can only be remitted through that first Sacrament, so the sins committed after Baptism can be effaced only through the Sacrament of Penance. I speak here of mortal sin, because venial sin may be wiped away by prayers and other good works. It is useful, nevertheless, to submit these to the Sacrament, and receive absolution for them, because it is often very difficult to distinguish *venial* from *mortal* sin; and also because the absolution we receive increases grace within us. The Sacrament of Penance is, therefore, as it were a second Baptism offered to sinners who have lost the grace of the first; but this second is a painful and laborious baptism, requiring tears, sorrow, and toil; while, in the first, God, wishing to manifest his exceeding great mercy, blots out all stains of sin from the soul without demanding any exertion on the part of the sinner; in the second, by a mixture of justice and mercy,—he only forgives sin on the fulfilment of certain hard and humiliating conditions. Besides the holy severity of Penance is not only a salutary remedy for the expiation of past sins, but it is also a sort of restraint, arresting the

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course of sin, curbing the passions of man, and obliging him to be for the future more firm and more circumspect in resisting the seductions of the world and the flesh.

Three things are necessary for the worthy reception of the Sacrament of Penance, namely, Contrition, Confession, and Satisfaction.

EXAMPLE.—Monseigneur de la Mothe d'Orleans, bishop of Amiens, confessed every eight days, and in his preparation for confession, he always made three stations; the first in hell, the second in heaven, and the third on Calvary. He first descended in thought to the place of torments, and beheld the place which he believed he had merited, in the midst of devouring and everlasting fire, and in the society of demons and reprobate souls. He thanked the Lord for not having cast him in there, and implored his mercy, begging of Him all those graces necessary for obtaining his salvation. He then ascended in spirit to the regions of happiness and glory; he mourned that his sins had closed its gates against him; and entreated the Lord to open them, at the same time invoking the Saints to intercede for him. He next proceeded in imagination to Calvary; there, dwelling attentively and lovingly on his crucified Saviour, he said within himself; "That is my work!—I am the cause of the torments which Christ had to undergo; I, by my sins, have co-operated with all other sinners in mangling the body of a man-God, in crucifying, and putting Him to death. O, Jesus! what harm have you done me? How could I treat you thus,—you who have loved me even to excess,—you whom I ought to love with an infinite love, if that were possible for me? It is because you are infinitely amiable that I love you, and am sorry for having offended you!"

What fruit should we not derive from our confessions, and what progress should we not make in the ways of God if we followed in the steps of that virtuous prelate!

Life of M. DE LA MOTHE.

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ARTICLE II.

OF CONTRITION.

CONTRITION is a sorrow and a detestation for sin, with a firm resolution of sinning no more. This first disposition is so necessary, that, without it, no sin, even venial sin, can ever be remitted. A malady which takes away the use of speech dispenses with confession: a sudden death supplies the want of satisfaction, at least in this life, but nothing can dispense with Contrition.

God only promises forgiveness to those who are converted to him with their whole heart, in the tears and lamentations of sincere sorrow, and to those who rend their hearts, not their garments. Contrition, to be genuine, must have four characters; it must be *interior*, that is to say, in the heart, and not on the lips only; it is not enough to read or pronounce acts of Contrition; it is the heart that has sinned, and it is the heart which must be sorry and detest sin. Contrition must be *supernatural*; it must be excited by a movement of the Holy Ghost, and not by the impulse of nature; seeing that to detest sin because it has given rise to some temporal misfortune, such as punishment, sickness, or loss, is not a true contrition, or one that entitles us to pardon; repentance must be for God's sake, and because sin has offended him, and is infinitely displeasing to Him. Contrition must be *sovereign*, that is to say, superior to all other sorrow, so that we may be disposed to lose all rather than fall again into sin. In fact, sin is the greatest of all evils, and deprives us of the greatest of all goods—the sovereign good; we ought, then, to lament it more than any other misfortune. It is not, however, necessary that this grief should be sensible; it may exist in the depth of the heart without manifesting itself exteriorly, otherwise than by those works which are its proof and its effect. Finally, Contrition should be *universal*, that is to say, extending over all the mortal sin that one has committed. There is no true Contrition so long as the heart remains attached to even one mortal sin, and that because all mortal sin is an injury done to God, and therefore merits hell. There is none,

therefore, that we ought not to hate and detest if we would regain the favour of God. This Contrition we can only obtain by humble and fervent prayer to God. Of ourselves, we can easily enough offend God; but without his assistance we cannot repent as we ought. We should, then, reflect on the motives which are proper to excite contrition in our hearts. Let us consider who it is that we have offended;—it is our Creator, our Father,—he who loads us with his gifts, and has redeemed us by his blood! What ingratitude is, then, ours! Let us consider, also, what we have lost by sin: an eternity of bliss was reserved for us, and we have forfeited our claim: what a grievous loss!—Let us consider to what sin exposes us; it makes us deserving of hell,—that place of tears, of rage, and of despair, wherein the fire is never quenched! What a horrible destiny!—Let us consider, above all, what Christ has suffered for the expiation of our sins, and to obtain for us the grace of forgiveness! It is impossible to reflect seriously on these truths without being moved to hatred for sin.

Contrition is of two sorts: *perfect* and *imperfect*, which last is also called *attrition*. Perfect Contrition is a sorrow for having offended God, because He is supremely good and supremely amiable, and that sin is displeasing to him; its motive is, then, the love of God: its effect is, also, to remit sin of itself, provided it be joined with the desire and the intention of confessing, supposing it cannot be exactly at that moment. Imperfect Contrition, or attrition, is a sorrow for having offended God, caused by the shame of having sinned, the fear of receiving the punishment it deserves, or the forfeiture of eternal bliss. Attrition, not being produced by motives sufficiently elevated, cannot of itself remit sins; but it suffices, if joined by absolution, provided that it includes the hope of pardon, and the foundation of the love of God.

EXAMPLE.—It is not enough for Contrition to embrace the past, it must also extend to the future, by the *firm purpose* of sinning no more. We find in Magdalen an admirable model of Contrition, *supernatural, interior, universal, and sovereign*. No sooner had she learned that Jesus was

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at the house of the Pharisee, than, faithful to the suggestion of grace, she arose and went to him without delay; she was not ashamed to show her repentance, as she had not been ashamed to give scandal by her sins. She enters the place where the people were assembled; there, not daring to stand before Jesus Christ, she humbly prostrates herself at his feet, waters them with her tears, and dries them with her beautiful tresses; then she pours upon them a vase of rich ointment, thus making use, in order to expiate her sins, of all that had formerly been instrumental in offending God. Eventually, by the liveliness of her sorrow, and the ardor of her love, she won from the lips of Christ these consoling words: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she loves much!"

St. Luke, 7-

ARTICLE III.

OF THE FIRM PURPOSE.

WE cannot obtain forgiveness of sin if we do not renounce it with all our heart, and if we be not in that disposition which the holy King David expresses in these words: "Yea, I have sworn, I will fulfil it, I will observe the holy decrees of thy justice!" God himself explains to us in the sacred Scripture the necessity of this *firm purpose*. "Let the impious quit his way, and the sinner his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and I will show him mercy!" There is, then, no mercy for him who renounces not sin: God only pardons us our sins in proportion as we are sorry for them, and when our repentance is sincere it necessarily embraces the purpose of sinning no more; for would it not be mocking God to ask his forgiveness of a sin which one purposed to commit again?

There are three marks whereby this firm purpose is to be recognized; the first of these is a change of life. A young man was proud, impetuous, passionate, refractory, prone to lying, negligent in his duties, dissipated in his exercises of piety; he becomes mild, humble, obedient, disposed to work, truthful in his conversation, collected in prayer, modest when in the church; here, then, is a sensible proof of the

sincerity of his resolution, and none may doubt that he had really a firm purpose of amendment. But he in whom there is seen no change of conduct, did not really renounce sin; his promises were only on the lips, and not from the heart; it is hard to believe that there is real repentance where no improvement is visible.

The second mark is to avoid the occasions which usually lead to sin; these are of two kinds: some, of themselves, tend to sin, such as bad books, plays, balls, lascivious songs, immodest pictures, and bad company. Others are only occasions of sin because of the weakness and disposition of the persons engaged in them; such are certain professions legitimate in themselves, but which give occasion for offending God, to those who have not enough of strength and of understanding to fulfil their duties. We are obliged to shun all such occasions; and to remain voluntarily in them, is a sign that one has not a firm purpose of amendment. The Holy Ghost assures us that he who loves the danger shall perish therein. It sometimes costs much to break off from the occasions of sin; but the sacrifice must be made, if we would avoid eternal destruction. Such is the meaning of these words of our Lord: "If thy right eye, or thy right hand be to thee a cause of scandal, pluck it out, or cut it off and cast it from thee; for it is better that one of thy members should perish, than that thy whole body should be cast into hell!" Which means as this: "Even if that which leads you into sin be as dear to you as your eye or hand you must put it away from you if you wish to be saved."

Finally, the third mark of a firm purpose is to labour to destroy bad habits; that is to say, the facility with which certain sins are committed, because of frequent repetition. To that end we are to watch carefully over ourselves, to confess often, and frequently to perform actions contrary to these evil habits. For example: actions of mildness opposed to anger, obedience to indocility, and to impose on ourselves some penance as often as we have given way to a bad habit. But if one makes no effort to overcome it, and seeks not to shun the occasions of relapsing into it, if his relapses are as frequent as before, if he is not sorry for it before God, and hastens not to purify himself by confes-

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alson, it is a certain proof that he has not had a firm resolution to amend his life.

EXAMPLE.—In the fourth century, Sapor, emperor of the Persians, having become a persecutor of the Christians, ordered all priests to be beheaded who would not renounce Jesus Christ. He summoned to his presence the archbishop of Seleucia, St. Simeon, who had the greatest care of his flock, and was reputed as the most staunch defender of Christianity. Sapor exhorted him to adore the sun, making him the most magnificent promises in case he obeyed, and threatening him if he obeyed not, that he himself should be put to death, and all Christians expelled from the empire. Simeon replied: "I cannot adore the sun, for by so doing I should betray my religion." The emperor had him put in prison, hoping that the hardship he was there made to endure might induce him to comply. As he was conducted to the prison, an old eunuch called Ustazade, who was steward of the imperial palace, was sensibly touched by the sight of the holy bishop, and respectfully prostrated himself before him; but the saint was very far from being gratified by this mark of respect, and turned away his face to let the eunuch see by that sign of contempt how guilty he was in having adored the sun, and thereby renouncing Christianity, for the man had been a Christian. This reproach which he had so well deserved, was more than Ustazade could bear, and he burst into tears. In order to expiate the crime of his apostacy, he cast off the white robe which he wore, and put on one of black, in token of his repentance; thus attired, he returned to the palace, and ceased not to bemoan his misfortune with tears and lamentations: "Wretch that I am! what have I then to expect from Jesus Christ, whom I have had the misfortune to renounce, when I am so sensible to the contempt which Simeon, who is but his minister, testifies towards me because of my apostacy!" The emperor, hearing that his faithful eunuch was much afflicted, wished to know the cause and sent for him. "What has happened to you," said he. "Oh! that every misfortune and every disgrace had befallen me," was the answer, "rather than that which

has come upon me; I weep because I am not dead, but am still living to behold that sun which I have been so unfortunate as to adore, for fear of displeasing you; I am deserving of a double death, one for having betrayed Jesus Christ, my adorable Saviour, and the other for having deceived you!" Ustazade then swore, that he would never again betray him whom he recognized and adored as his God. On hearing this, Sapor became furious and swore in his turn, that he would have all the Christians in his empire put to death; nevertheless, through pity for the old man, he used every means to try to win him over. "No," said that true penitent, "you shall never succeed, I will never again be such a fool as to pay to the creature the supreme worship which is due only to the Creator." The emperor seeing his constancy, sentenced him to be beheaded. When the martyr was on his way to the place of execution, he called to another eunuch who was his friend, and begged of him to go to Sapor, and beseech him, as the reward of the many years he had so faithfully served him, that at the moment of his execution, a herald might proclaim to the people that Ustazade had not been condemned to death for any crime, but only that, being a Christian, he had refused to betray his God. Sapor gave his consent, and that the more willingly as he hoped it might intimidate the other Christians, seeing that he showed no mercy even to an old man who had served him long and faithfully. Ustazade showed that he had both true contrition and a firm purpose.

Ecclesiastical History.

ARTICLE IV.

OF CONFESSION.

THE second part of the sacrament of penance is confession, or the accusation of one's sins to an approved priest, in order to obtain forgiveness.

Every priest receives at his ordination, the power of remitting sins; but he cannot exercise it save by virtue of a particular mission from his bishop, who determines the place and the extent of his jurisdiction.

Any priest who has not received this commission, or who exercises it without the authority of his bishop, cannot forgive sins.

There are also certain grievous crimes whose remission the bishops reserve to themselves, in order to inspire us with greater horror of those sins, and these are called *reserved cases*.

It is necessary to confess all the mortal sins which one has committed, even those which are hidden in the depth of the heart, such as bad desires and wicked thoughts, &c. This obligation is an effect of the power given by Christ to his disciples, of remitting and retaining sins in his name, for the state of the conscience cannot be known if it be not revealed to the priest by the sinners themselves.

Confession must be *humble, sincere, and entire*. *Humble*, for the penitent should consider himself as guilty of high treason against the divine majesty, as having thereby merited eternal torment, and as prostrating himself before the minister of Jesus Christ, to make amends for the many sins he has committed, and to sue for a pardon of which he feels himself unworthy, but for which he hopes through the divine goodness. *Sincere*, that is to say, that he must confess his sins exactly as he knows them, without permitting himself to lessen their greatness or enormity by studied expressions or for want of due examination. *Entire*, for he must declare the number, the nature, and all the considerable circumstances of his sins; the number, by stating as nearly as possible, how many times he has committed each sin; the nature, or kind, for it is not sufficient to say in a general way that he has sinned grievously; but he must state in a particular manner what sort of sin he has committed, whether it be theft, slander, calumny, &c. Without this the confessor cannot judge as to the state of the conscience, nor prescribe the remedies and the penance which the case requires. He must also declare the principal circumstances, and these are of two kinds: some change the nature of the sin: for instance, to rob a church is not merely a robbery, but a sacrilege, which is a much more grievous sin than theft. Others only make the sin greater, without changing its nature: for example, to steal from any

one is a theft; but to take two or three francs from a poor person who had but that in the world, is a much greater sin than to take a similar sum from a rich man, so that this is a circumstance which must be declared. But in order to confess one's sins in a proper manner, he must know them exactly: hence the necessity of the examination.

EXAMPLE.—The empress Jane, a princess adorned with every virtue, had chosen for her director St. John Nepomucenus, canon of Prague. Wenceslaus, the husband of the empress, was exceedingly jealous, and put an evil construction on the most trivial and innocent actions of his wife, whom he suspected of being unfaithful to him. One day when she had been to confession, he went to her confessor, and inquired whether his suspicions were well-founded. The saint replied that he could not speak on such a subject, that the seal of confession is inviolable, and that all knowledge obtained through confession is as though it were still unknown. The emperor, being exceedingly angry, maintained a gloomy silence. Some days after, he had the saint again brought before him; he employed caresses, promises, and threats to induce him to reveal what the empress told him in confession; but all in vain. He caused him to be treated in the most inhuman manner, but still he could obtain nothing. Finally, he threatened him with death, in case he still refused to comply with his wishes. "You may kill me," replied St. John Nepomucenus, "but you shall not make me speak as you would wish." Wenceslaus, in a rage, ordered him to be bound hands and feet, and cast into the river. The martyr was quickly smothered in the water, whereupon certain pious persons carried off his body and laid it in a tomb, where it operated many miracles.

FELLER, *Dict. Hist.*

ARTICLE V.

THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

NECESSITY OF THIS EXAMINATION. This necessity is founded on that of confessing all the sins that one has com-

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mitted; for how can they be confessed, if they are not sought and discovered? The Holy Council of Trent requires that we prepare ourselves for confession by a diligent investigation. An individual who, for want of proper examination, omitted to confess any one mortal sin, would not obtain absolution or remission of his sins; he would but profane the sacrament, and thereby commit a mortal sin.

Condition of the examination. We must examine ourselves with care and attention. For want of this attention there may be sins left unseen, particularly sins of omission as regards our duties, sins of habit, sins of speech, such as too great quickness, or passion, sins of thought and of slander, which easily become habitual. We should examine ourselves with the utmost severity, for otherwise we may regard as of slight consequence sins which are really considerable. Of this class are the sins opposed to the love of our neighbour, and those which outrage the holy virtue of purity.

Happy are those truly pious persons who are ever in that excellent disposition of not committing even venial sin deliberately. They have no need of a long examination; if they fall into any fault at all serious, it is a monster ever present to their minds, and there is but little danger of their forgetting it when they go to confession.

The object of the examination of conscience. Persons who seldom go to confession will have much trouble, (especially if they be not well-instructed) in discovering the sins which they have committed; they may make use, with advantage, of the examination to be found in the prayer-books, and of the devotions for confession. They will thus discover the sins of which they are guilty, together with their number and circumstances; that is, provided they do really wish to discover them; beg God's assistance for that purpose, and following a good method in their examination, they will hearken to the voice of conscience.

When examining themselves for a general confession, or for one embracing several years, it will be useful for certain persons to write down in abridgement the sins of which they find themselves guilty; such persons will do well, during the course of their investigation, to reflect that God

is present, and frequently to say to him, "Lord, give me to know the number and the enormity of my sins; and grant me, through the merits of Jesus Christ, the grace to confess them entirely, and to detest them as I ought. After the examination, they should excite themselves to contrition, and when they find themselves moved with sorrow for their sins, they ought to make frequent acts of contrition. It is useful at that time to repeat very slowly and with much attention, "I confess to Almighty God," &c.

EXAMPLE.—A person who desired to commence a regular course of life, made a retreat, during which she wrote down her general confession; and, at a moment when she had just been meditating on hell, and was still penetrated by the salutary thought of the eternal torments, she cast her eyes on the paper whereon she had written her sins. On seeing there the sins of all her past life, her fear was re-doubled, and she took the paper, saying: "Alas! what fuel for the eternal fire? Are there no means of having it quenched?" This reflection made her resolve to renounce for ever the frivolities of the world, and to lead a retired and edifying life.

ARTICLE VI.

OF SACRILEGIOUS CONFESSION.

To RECEIVE absolution without the necessary dispositions, is not only to render it null and void, but it is also committing a new sin, which is nothing less than a sacrilege, since it profanes a sacrament. Then, instead of appeasing the wrath of God one does but outrage him, and trample under foot the adorable blood of the Son of God, which, falling on an unworthy object, is profaned in a more criminal manner than when the Jews shed it on the cross. the remedy prepared for the cure of our souls is thus perverted into a poison. And yet how many young people are guilty of this crime! What then are the causes of so deplorable a misfortune? In many cases, it is the shame of confessing certain faults. The devil, that spirit of ma-

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lice and falsehood, diminishes in their eyes the horror of the sin before it is committed, but shows it to them in all its deformity when they would confess it. Nothing is more unfounded than this false shame. The confessor is bound by all laws, human and divine, to observe the most inviolable secrecy; and hence to disclose one's sins to him is as if they were never revealed to any one. Once out of the sacred tribunal, he can make no use of what has been confessed to him; there is no reason to apprehend from him either insult or reproach; it is charity and Christian meekness which dictate to him the advice he will give you. Besides, he to whom you confess your sins is not an angel; he is a man like yourself, exposed to your own weakness and infirmity, and therefore disposed to have compassion on yours; he is a faithful friend who desires only your cure and your return to virtue; he is a tender father who will be touched by the confidence you place in him, and whose whole care will be to aid and assist you in your pressing necessity. Say, would you let shame prevent you from acquainting a doctor with any secret malady or disease you might have, especially if death were to be feared from keeping it concealed? Does not the love of life overcome all repugnance in such cases? Why then yield to shame when the soul is mortally wounded? Why not have courage to reveal it to him who can apply a saving remedy? Moreover, what is there to be gained by now concealing sins from one's confessor? Can they be concealed from God? Must they not be confessed sooner or later, in order to escape eternal death, and if we would not behold these same sins revealed before the entire world? There are others whom the fear of not being permitted to make their first communion, or their paschal communion, hinders from confessing all their sins; but nothing is more senseless than to profane two sacraments rather than be kept back from the first communion or the Easter duty. Of those penitents who thus receive absolution without the requisite dispositions, some take that apparent remission for a real forgiveness; they think no more of repenting for those sins, consequently profane all the sacraments they afterwards receive, and generally die in a state of impenitence. Others

reproaching themselves all their lives for a crime so enormous, are exposed to the most fearful despair, or become callous in iniquity, and persevere therein till death. "Go in peace," said the minister of Christ, to these false penitents. But God said to them: "Go with my malediction!" The only remedy for so great an evil is a general confession made with all the necessary dispositions. He, on the contrary, who has freely opened his heart to his confessor, and who has availed himself of the time for proving himself, is well recompensed for the slight inconvenience to which he submitted; if he was put off for a time, that delay was short; it was soon got over, and the result is the testimony of a good conscience; he believes that his communion was well made; peace reigns in his heart, and during his whole life he will bless the happy moment when he obtained a victory over himself which ensures to him a sweet tranquillity on earth, and eternal happiness in the world to come.

EXAMPLES.—"Take care of rendering yourself guilty of the blood of Jesus Christ!" said a servant of God to himself, when fearful of profaning that precious blood. "That blood is of great value,—it is the blood of the Just and Holy One; it is the blood of a God by reason of his intimate union with the divinity. That adorable blood was shed for my redemption. It is for my use. I can avail myself of it in the sacred tribunal to cleanse away my sins, and at the table of the Lord for the nourishment of my soul; but what a monster of ingratitude I should be if I treated it like him who would trample upon it by making a confession without sincerity or without true contrition, and then communicating in the state of sin! Oh! how well he deserves hell who is guilty of such a crime!—Oh, my Saviour, added he, "never let me become guilty of your blood!—ah! death rather than that—aye, a thousand deaths!"

LASAUSSE.

During the fortnight of the Paschal term, a priest gave to a minister a considerable sum which he never thought of expecting, being money received in restitution. When opportunity offered, the minister could not help saying: "Well,

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after all, it must be acknowledged that confession is a very good thing!"

St. Augustine has had the courage to write his confession; and published his errors and his disorders in order to make known the great mercy which God had shown him in pardoning so many crimes. His humility and heroism in thus unveiling his iniquities drew down upon him such abundant blessings that he became a great saint.

ARTICLE VII.

ON THE MANNER OF CONFESSING.

WE kneel during our confession, in order to express by that humiliating posture, that we are confused and penetrated with grief for having offended God, whose minister we recognize in our confessor. We are, at the same time, to humble ourselves internally, and endeavour to excite in our selves a sincere sorrow for our sins.

We give to the priest the name of Father, saying: "Bless me, father!" Your confessor is the father of your soul; his office in the sacred tribunal is that of establishing Jesus Christ in your heart, of reviving in your soul the life of grace, if unhappily you had lost it, or to strengthen it within you if you are still living in the sight of God by justice. Regard him as a tender father who is really zealous for your salvation; if he be your spiritual father you ought to honour him, to have great confidence in him, and to be disposed to obey him.

"Bless me, father! for I have sinned!"

It is not because of having sinned that we deserve to be blessed, for by sinning we rendered ourselves unworthy of being blessed by God through the medium of his minister. These words signify: "Obtain for me, father, the grace of conversion, and that of receiving absolution, being well disposed, for that, having had the misfortune to sin, I repent with all my heart."

The *Confiteor* is an excellent form for the act of Contrition; while repeating it we are to enter into the meaning of the words it contains. We thereby, in a general way, confess

our sins to God, to Mary, to St. Michael, to the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, and to all the saints, acknowledging ourselves guilty, most guilty, and confessing that the sins which defile our soul are purely our own fault; we then recommend ourselves to the mercy of God, and invoke the saints to the end that their intercession may obtain it for us. It is after this general avowal that we make our detailed confession to the minister of God. We ought previously to mention how long it is since our last confession,—whether we then received absolution, and whether we religiously and exactly performed the sacramental penance which had been imposed upon us.

In confessing our sins, we are to bear in mind that we do so in presence of our Judge, and are therefore to speak in a tone of humility, denoting that we are sensible of having offended God, and are sincerely sorry for our offences.

After having made a sincere confession of our sins to the priest, we are to say to him that we beg God's pardon of them. He who, in the sacred tribunal, has not a true sorrow for his sins, does but lie to God in the person of his minister, by saying that he begs God's pardon; and lying to God, is it not mocking him?

We ask of the minister of the Lord, to whom we have confessed our sins, two things, penance and absolution. By asking a penance of him, the penitent prays that he may order him to say or do something to punish himself for the sins he has confessed, and to preserve him from falling again into similar faults. He knows, or ought to know that all iniquity, without exception, must be punished either in this world or the other; *here* by the sinner himself, or *hereafter* by an avenging God.

By asking absolution he acknowledges that the priest has received from Christ the divine power of remitting sins; he prays him to grant him that inestimable favour, but adds: "If you judge me worthy," and then proceeds to finish the *Confiteor*. By the institution of Jesus Christ, the confessor is established as judge; he is obliged to follow the rules of Christian and rational prudence, and can never, without betraying his ministry, pronounce a favourable sentence when he has reason to think that it will not be ratified by God;

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that leniency, that criminal indulgence of his would not exonerate the penitent, and would criminate the confessor himself, as St. Ambrose said. An absolution given to a sinner who is not properly disposed, is not merely of no avail to him, but it renders him still more guilty; it often becomes the seal of his reprobation, and the true cause of his destruction.

EXAMPLE.—A certain person who had the name of being pious, was, nevertheless, too confident of herself, and did not apply often enough to God; she had the weakness to fall into one of those sins, the confession of which costs so much to persons who blush at the very mention of sins contrary to purity. No sooner had she sinned than she repented. "Whatever it costs me," said she, "I will go straight and confess it, and lay open the depth of my heart." She set out on the instant, but as she was going, it seemed to her that she heard the devil asking her, "Where are you going?" to which she courageously replied: "I am going to cover myself with confusion, and confound you." When one has had the courage to declare in confession a sin whose avowal they find difficult, he feels immediately after like one who has succeeded in casting off a heavy burden. LASAUSSE

ARTICLE VIII.

OF SATISFACTION.

SATISFACTION, which is the third part of the Sacrament of Penance, is a reparation of the injury done to God and our neighbour. To satisfy God for our sins is to do or to suffer something in order to appease his wrath excited by those sins, or to repair the damage done to our neighbour. Satisfaction, at least, the acceptance of our penance and the desire of performing it, is absolutely necessary for obtaining through the Sacrament of Penance the remission of sin: when one has no intention of satisfying God, he cannot obtain the remission of his sins. It is God who remits them, and he alone is master of the conditions on which he will grant forgiveness. In the Sacrament of Baptism he

dispenses with Satisfaction ; hence the ministers of the Church impose no penance on those whom they baptize, what sins soever they may have previously committed. It is not the same in the Sacrament of Penance. God, by the mouth of the priest, remits the eternal punishment if the penitent have the necessary dispositions, but there usually remains a temporal penalty to be undergone. The penance given by the confessor must therefore be punctually accomplished, and we ought besides to practise other good works with the intention of satisfying the justice of God.

They who die without having undergone this temporal punishment, have it to undergo in the other world, and must finish in purgatory the expiation of their sins. In fact, it agrees with the justice of God that those who have abused the first grace received in baptism, and violated the promises then made, should have some difficulty in obtaining a reconciliation ; and that they who have dishonoured the glorious titles of *child of God, member of Jesus Christ, and temple of the Holy Ghost* ; who have treated as a profane thing the adorable blood by which they had been sanctified, and who have besides outraged the Spirit of Grace, that they should not be so easily pardoned as those who have not been baptized, and whose sins, committed principally through ignorance, bear not the same character of ingratitude. Besides, the mercy of God arranges it so that from the very punishment which the penitent sinner undergoes, he derives a positive advantage : it becomes a restraint on his passions, and a remedy for his bad habits ; for the satisfaction imposed by the confessor should be not only adapted to expiate past sins, but also to eradicate the vice from which they sprang ; so for pride he should impose humiliation, for avarice or covetousness, alms, fasting for intemperance, and mortification of the senses for impurity ; and these penances should, moreover, be proportioned to the sins committed, that is to say, they should be greater or less according to the magnitude and number of the sins.

The works of penance are principally those which are prescribed by the priest, the most usual are *prayer, fasting, and alms-deeds*. By prayer is meant all the acts of religion, such as pious reading, and assiduity at the divine

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offices ; by fasting, all that mortifies the senses ; and alms-deeds comprise all the temporal and spiritual assistance given to our neighbour. God will also accept in satisfaction all the afflictions which befall us, such as sickness, injuries, and persecutions ; but in order that all these may have a value before God, they must be borne in a spirit of penance, uniting them to the sufferings and satisfaction of Christ, through which alone we can merit or satisfy ; it is Jesus Christ alone who gives to our actions all their merit and value ; it is He who presents them to God, and it is on his account that they are accepted by his Father.

We are also bound to satisfy our neighbour when we have injured him in any way, whether in his honour by slander and calumny, in his goods by theft, or any other species of damage, or in his person by any bad treatment. We can only obtain from God the pardon of our sins by being reconciled with our neighbour if we have in any way injured him, by repairing his honour if we have blackened his reputation, and by restoring to him what we have taken from him, and repairing any damage we have done him.

EXAMPLE.—We have seen a St. Paul the first hermit, a St. Anthony, a St. Mary of Egypt, and many others who followed their example, renouncing all that they possessed on earth, to bury themselves in dreary deserts, covering themselves with hair-cloth, and living on wild roots. And all this was done to satisfy the justice of God.

LASAUSSÉ.

ARTICLE IX.

OF INDULGENCES.

INDULGENCE is the remission of the temporal punishment due to sins already remitted as to their eternal punishment. Whence it follows that Indulgence discharges entirely or in part, not only from the temporal chastisement due to sin according to the rigor of the ancient canons, but even from the debt which the sinner owes to the divine justice on account of his sins, and which must be paid either in this life

or the other; here, by works of satisfaction, or hereafter by the pains of purgatory.

Indulgence, therefore, neither remits sin nor its eternal punishment, but merely the temporary punishment which usually remains to be endured, although the stain of the sin has been effaced by the Sacrament of Penance; it either lessens the rigor of that temporary punishment or abridges its duration.

Formerly there was imposed for certain sins a public penance of several years' duration: and in all that time the sinner had to pray much and often,—pass the days in mourning, and the nights in watching and in tears,—to lie on a hard couch, to fast, give alms, and practise other good works. Although the ancient discipline is now laid aside, yet the justice of God is still the same, and sin is still as deserving of punishment as it was in the primitive ages. It is to supply the deficiency of our satisfaction that the Church, ever animated and guided by the spirit of God, grants indulgences. Christ has given that power to his Church in the person of the Apostles, when he said to them: "Whatsoever ye bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye unloose on earth shall be unloosed in heaven." She has, therefore, power to impose penalties for the expiation of our sins, and also that of remitting those penalties when it is consistent with the glory of God and the spiritual good of her children. The Church, in the early ages, had respect to the recommendation of the martyrs, and yielding to their prayers, she treated with indulgence those sinners for whom they interfered. She also abridged the time of penance, in favour of those who had commenced it with courage and firmness, when they were threatened with persecution, in order to strengthen them and enable them to resist the violence of the persecutors. It is by the superabundant merits of Jesus Christ, of the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, that she acquits her children of what they owe to the divine justice.

Indulgences have been called by the holy fathers, *relaxations*, *remissions*, *absolutions*, *peace*, and *reconciliations*.

They are of three sorts: plenary indulgences, partial indulgences and jubilees.

A plenary indulgence is the general remission of the temporal punishment due for all our sins.

A partial indulgence is the remission of only a portion of that punishment according to the intention of the giver and the disposition of him who receives it.

A jubilee is an extra plenary indulgence granted by the Pope to all the faithful.

The jubilee was first fixed for every century ; but now it occurs every twenty-five years, besides that which usually follows the accession of each supreme Pontiff.

The Pope, being the head of all the Church, can grant indulgences to all ; and his power being unlimited, he may give them plenary or partial, according as he thinks proper and useful for the advantage of the faithful.

Bishops may also, in certain cases, grant several days of indulgence.

Plenary, or partial indulgences are gained by reciting certain prayers, and by performing works of piety to which they are attached.

We must not imagine that indulgences free us from the obligation of doing penance, and that it suffices to have the intention of gaining them, in order to be dispensed from works of penance ; on the contrary, indulgences always suppose that one has performed a part of his penance, or is really disposed to perform it if he have time and strength, since the Church grants them only to remit whatever is wanting in the penance that should have been done, rather than entirely dispensing with it. It is, doubtless, for the same reason that the Council of Trent declares that, according to the ancient and approved custom of the Church, they ought only to be granted with reserve and in moderation, and that those who wish to gain them must do so by prayer, by alms-deeds, and usually by fasting and other good works.

EXAMPLE.—A certain pious person who had in her youth committed many serious faults, was wont to repeat all the different prayers to which the sovereign pontiffs have attached indulgences. Every day she also condemned herself to some mortifications, giving alms in proportion to

her means, and often repeating these beautiful words, "Lord! have mercy on me now—every moment of my life, and particularly at the hour of my death; this I beg of you through the merits of Jesus Christ, and through the intercession of Mary, the angels, and saints. I offer thee in the spirit of penance all that I may have to suffer, and I will not gratify myself in any way whatsoever!" When it was represented to her that the mortified life she led would certainly shorten her existence, she replied: "I must suffer a little in this life, fearing lest I should have much to suffer in that which is to come!"

Explanation of the Imperial Catechism.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST.

ARTICLE I.

INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST.—TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

THE Eucharist is a sacrament which really and truly contains the body, and blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under the form of bread and wine; it is the greatest and most august of all the sacraments. In fact, the other sacraments give us grace, while the Eucharist gives us the Author of grace, God himself. Through it, Jesus Christ dwells in us, and we in him. It had been promised by Our Lord, long before the time when he instituted it, as we read in the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. After having said to the Jews: "I am the living bread which came down from heaven," Our Saviour added: "The bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world." And as the Jews murmured at this saying, he repeated it again, and still more forcibly, saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall have no life in you; he who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, shall abide in me, and I in him." This promise he fulfilled on

the eve of his passion, when at the last Supper he ate the paschal lamb with his disciples. He took bread, and after returning thanks to his Father, he broke, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take ye and eat; this is my body which shall be delivered for you; do this in remembrance of me." Then, taking the chalice, he said: "Drink ye of this, for this is my blood, the blood of the New Testament, which shall be shed for you and for many unto the remission of sin: as often as ye do this, do it in remembrance of me."

The substance of bread and wine which we see and taste, is the sensible sign whereby we know the invisible effect of the Eucharist: it signifies that the body and blood of Christ are the spiritual food of our souls, as bread and wine are the nourishment of our bodies; but although these appearances, as to colour, form, and taste, remain the same after consecration, yet they are no longer bread and wine, the substance of the bread being changed into that of the body of Christ, and the substance of the wine into that of his blood; so that it then becomes the same body which was fastened to the cross, and is now in heaven. And although we do not see the body of Christ, but only the form of bread, yet it is really and substantially there: we perceive the appearance of bread which is no longer the real substance, and we do not see the body of Christ which it really has become. As it is a living and animated body, it follows that Jesus Christ is entirely contained under each of the two forms, and in every particle thereof: under the form of bread, the body of Christ is united to his blood, soul, and divinity, and under the form of wine his blood is united to his body, his soul and his divinity; for, now that Christ is, glorious and immortal, he can no longer be divided: his blood cannot be separated from his body. We, therefore, receive as much by communicating under one single form, as if we communicated in both.

This wonderful change is effected through the omnipotence of the words of Jesus Christ, which the priest pronounces in his name. It is Christ himself who works all these marvels through the organ of his ministers; to him who of old changed water into wine at the wedding of

Chanaan; to him who of nothing has made the heavens and the earth, it is just as easy to change one substance into another, as to draw all things from nothing by his word alone. It is true we cannot comprehend how these wonders are operated, but we know that nothing is impossible to God, and we believe on the word of Jesus Christ, who has loved us so much as to operate in our favour things that surpass our understanding. God is able to work this miracle, for He is Almighty; and that he does it we cannot doubt, since he assures us that it is his body. We ought then to hear his words with docility and respect, and not attempt to reason on a thing which is beyond our comprehension, nor seek the natural order of things in that which is above nature. Let us believe then, on the word of our God, who is really present in the Eucharist; let us believe, notwithstanding the counter-evidence of our senses, that the bread and wine are substantially changed; when God speaks, we cannot listen to the testimony of our senses.

Our Lord, to unite us intimately to himself, has deigned to become our nourishment; he has commanded us to drink of that same blood which he has shed for us, and to eat of the victim immolated for us upon the cross. He has then been profuse in miracles to procure for us that happiness.

EXAMPLE.—St. Ambrose, in one of his discourses, addressing himself to the martyr St. Lawrence, exclaims, “Whence comes then, Oh illustrious martyr! that invincible courage which enables you to endure the most dreadful torments as though you felt them not? The fire consumes your body, and you brave the tyrant and the executioners! Ah! it is because you have received in the holy Communion the strong and mighty God, and it is his blood that flows in your veins!”

ARTICLE II.

ON THE DISPOSITIONS FOR RECEIVING THE EUCHARIST.

THERE is no sacrament which unites us more closely with God than the divine Eucharist; and there is none,

consequently, for which we should more carefully prepare. The holier this sacrament is, the more need there is of bringing holy dispositions to receive it. It is not for man, but for God that we prepare a dwelling. Of these necessary dispositions, some regard the soul and others the body. The first disposition of the soul is purity of conscience. We must prove ourselves, according to the precept of the Apostle, before we eat of that divine bread, and if we feel ourselves guilty of any mortal sin, we must have recourse to the sacrament of penance. The Eucharist supposes spiritual life in those who receive it, for in order to be nourished by it, the soul must be living: it is the God of purity who gives himself to us, and he can only take pleasure in a pure heart. It was to make his Apostles sensible of this truth, that Jesus Christ washed their feet before he gave them his body to eat and his blood to drink. It was for the same reason that, in the Primitive Church, the deacon turning to the people before the consecration of the sacred mysteries, said aloud: "Things that are holy are for the saints." The Baptismal innocence, either preserved or restored by penance, is that nuptial garment without which none are to appear at the wedding feast. That innocence, that purity, is the principal disposition, but with it must be joined a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity.

The Eucharist is styled by the Church a sacrament of faith, for they who receive it must believe without hesitation that they receive Christ himself, as he came into the world, died to save us, arose gloriously from the dead, and is now in heaven, at the right hand of his Father. The firm hope consists in expecting with confidence from Jesus Christ all that we ask of him relating to our salvation; what can He refuse to us, who gives us himself wholly and entirely? He has declared that whoever eats his flesh and drinks his blood shall have life eternal, and shall rise again at the last day; after such a promise, what confidence should we not have in his goodness? Let us, then, approach the holy table in the same disposition as did the woman in the Gospel, who said within herself: "If I but touch the hem of his garment I shall be healed," which was instantly done, as she had believed. The Eucharist is a sa-

crament of love; it is by an incomprehensible love that Christ has instituted it, and would it not be monstrous ingratitude to receive it into a cold, indifferent heart? But this love must be accompanied by profound sentiments of humility, of adoration, and of gratitude.

What is it that we receive in the Eucharist? Is it not God himself, the Creator and Sovereign Master of the universe, whose power, whose sanctity, and all other perfections are infinite? And what are we? We have in ourselves nought but nothingness and sin. Let us, therefore, humble ourselves before our God, acknowledging with the centurion, in the gospel, that we are not worthy to approach him; let us prostrate ourselves at his sacred feet, and adore him with an holy awe, for, although hidden under the veil of the Eucharistic symbols, he is none the less our God. Let us excite in our hearts a boundless sentiment of gratitude; if it is to be in proportion to the favour bestowed, what should it be when the gift which we receive is infinite in its value?

The body must also contribute, in some degree, to honour the divine guest whom it is to receive. There are two dispositions necessary on the part of the body: the first is, that it be fasting; the Church has ordained it so, from the primitive times, through respect for this divine Sacrament, and she only dispenses with this law in favour of those who, being dangerously ill, receive it as the *viaticum*. The second is, to be kneeling, and to have the exterior as modest and as collected as possible. This posture of the body and this respectful demeanour, announce the sentiments of a soul which humbles itself profoundly before the Supreme Majesty.

EXAMPLE.—Being irritated by the hard-heartedness of Pharaoh, and touched by the just complaints of his people, God resolved to punish that obstinate prince, and deliver the Hebrews from the bondage under which they groaned. When the time appointed by his eternal decrees had arrived, he sent a destroying Angel, who killed in one night all the first-born children of the Egyptians; but he ordered his people to sacrifice a lamb on the previous evening to eat it in every family, and to mark with its blood the door of each

house, so that the angel, the minister of his vengeance, might spare the children of that chosen race.

Shortly after, he fed them with manna which for forty years he sent down from heaven.

Who can fail to recognize in these two figures the divine Eucharist? The various relations existing between the shadow and the reality are far too striking to leave room for mistake.

The Israelites, who were the people of God, were alone commanded to immolate that mysterious lamb; and the exterminating Angel spared all the families of the Israelites whose doors were marked with its blood. Let us place the reality side by side with the figure: Christians alone have the right to sacrifice the divine Paschal Lamb, and the Angels, the minister of God's vengeance, spares all those who are marked with the blood thereof; and Christ has decreed that the faithful shall often renew this sacrifice, in memory of their deliverance from the slavery of the devil.

The manna, that celestial food, was also a very natural image of the Sacrament of our altars. It is called the bread of heaven: its taste was the most delicious that could be imagined, and the Israelites only ate it after having been delivered from the captivity of Pharaoh.

The Eucharist, as Christ himself tells us, is the living bread which came down from heaven; it is the fruitful source of every grace, and can only be partaken of when the yoke of the demon is cast off, that is to say, when we are freed from the slavery of sin.

ARTICLE III.

OF THE EFFECTS OF THE EUCHARIST.

THE Eucharist produces admirable effects in those who receive it with worthy dispositions: the first is to unite us intimately with Jesus Christ and to incorporate us with Him. We may be united to him by faith, in believing all the truths that he has revealed; we may also be united to him by charity, in loving him perfectly: faith brings our mind in subjection to him, and charity attaches to him our heart.

But there is a union much more intimate and more perfect being that which is effected by the participation of his sacred flesh and of his precious blood : this union is the proper effect of the Eucharist. Jesus Christ gives himself entirely to us, and unites his body with ours : by this union we become the same body and the same spirit with him. As the food which we take nourishes our body, so in like manner does the holy Eucharist nourish our soul ; there is no sort of difference between the two cases, for, even as this food is changed into our substance, so does the holy Communion transform us into Jesus Christ. This it was that made St. Paul say : " It is no more I who live, it is Jesus Christ who liveth in me."

The second effect of the Eucharist is to increase, to confirm, and to preserve within us the spiritual life of grace. Our divine Saviour, having become the food of our souls, remains not inactive ; he gives a new impulse to the divine grace ; he confirms us in his love, and makes us preserve that precious treasure with constant fidelity ; hence that unvarying sanctity which we so much admire in those who communicate devoutly. Would you know what it is that maintains that young man in such edifying piety, and in a regularity of life which renders him a model for all around ? It is the holy Eucharist which he frequently receives, and with excellent dispositions.

The third effect of this august Sacrament, is to weaken our natural concupiscence, and to moderate the violence of our passions. We are all born with a strong tendency to evil ; it is like a venom infused into our whole nature by the sin of the first man. The Eucharist does not entirely free us from this proneness to evil, but it lessens its malignity ; and hence it is that the Fathers of the Church have called it an antidote, a counterpoison. In reality, this is what every one feels who communicates frequently and with good dispositions ; they feel their own strength increase while that of their spiritual enemy is diminished.

The fourth effect of the Eucharist is to give us the pledge of eternal life and of a glorious resurrection. It is Christ himself who teaches to us this consoling truth : " He who eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and

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I will raise him up at the last day." The life which the holy Eucharist imparts to the soul is, as it were, the beginning and the foretaste of the life of bliss; and that life shall abide in us and shall be everlasting, if we do not voluntarily deprive ourselves of it. This divine sacrament acts also on our bodies; it is in them as a seed and a germ of immortality, which shall one day bring them forth from the dust of the tomb, and clothe them with every glorious quality. The presence of Christ within us becomes an assured pledge of our immortality, but it is only fervent communion that operates these happy effects; tepid communion, that is to say, without sincere piety or with any affection to venial sin, leaves the soul in all its original weakness, which it even increases, and this applies still more strongly to sacrilegious communion, which is an enormous crime.

EXAMPLE.—One day when Jesus was teaching in the synagogue of Caphernaum, this question was asked him by some of the listeners: "What shall we do to perform the will of God?" Jesus answered them: "The will of God is that ye believe in Him whom he hath sent." Whereupon the Jews replied: "What hast thou wrought, that seeing thee we should believe? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, for it is written: 'He hath given them bread from heaven to eat.'" Our Lord resumed his discourse, saying: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses hath not given ye bread from heaven, but it is my Father who giveth the true bread from heaven, for the bread of God is He who cometh down from heaven, and who giveth life to the world. I am the bread of life; your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and they are dead; but this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that he who eateth it may not die. I am the bread which came down from heaven; he who eateth of this bread shall have life eternal, and the bread which I will give is my flesh for the life of the world. He who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed; he who eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him."

What more clear than these words? "The bread which

I will give is my flesh: my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed?" and do they not show beyond all doubt the real presence of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Eucharist?

JOHN VI.

ARTICLE IV.

OF BAD COMMUNION.

THEY who communicate in a state of mortal sin, do indeed receive the body and blood of Christ, but they receive not the graces and salutary effects of the sacrament. On the contrary they eat and drink their own condemnation, according to the dreadful sentence of the apostle St. Paul: "Whoever" says he, "eateth of that bread and drinketh the chalice of the Lord unworthily, (that is to say, in a state of sin whereby he is rendered unworthy) is guilty of the body and blood of Christ. Let a man, therefore, prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the chalice, for he who eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own condemnation, not discerning the body of the Lord." From these words we learn what a crime it is to make a bad communion, and how terrible are its effects. This crime is the most horrible of all sacrileges, being the profanation of the most august of all sacraments, and of all that is holiest in religion; it profanes in the most outrageous manner, both the divinity and humanity of Christ; it unites as far as such a union is possible, that divine Saviour with iniquity, by causing his adorable blood to flow through veins infected with sin. This crime is like to that of Judas, in its perfidy and treachery; like that unhappy traitor, the unworthy communicant betrays his divine Master to his most cruel enemies; like him, after having been loaded with his favours, he violates the most sacred rights of friendship and of gratitude; he crucifies him anew, makes him the sport of his passions, and tramples on the blood of the new covenant; such are again the words of the Apostle. And then what are the effects of a crime so heinous? Here they are: He who eats and drinks unworthily, eats and drinks his own judgment and condemna-

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tion. The profaner eats and drinks the warrant whereby he is condemned; he incorporates it with himself, and renders it in some sort inevitable. Nourishment is no longer separable from him who has taken it, for it is changed into his own flesh and blood, and becomes the same substance with himself, so that they can no longer be divided; in like manner, when the profaner has eaten his own judgment, he has, as it were, changed it into himself; his condemnation is not merely written in a book, nor on tables of marble or of stone, but on his own heart: it has passed into his veins, and he bears it incessantly with and about him. Oh, dreadful punishment, which can only proceed from the wrath of a God betrayed and insulted! Hence, it usually happens that he who has committed this crime falls into a callousness of heart, and a darkness of mind, which lead him on to final impenitence. We have a fearful example of this in the perfidious Judas: scarcely had he received the holy Eucharist unworthily, when his mind was darkened and his heart, as it were, petrified, nothing could stop him; he quickly arose from the table, and consummated his crime. In what did his sacrilege end? In despair, in death, and in eternal reprobation. Nevertheless, it must not be inferred from this that he who has made a bad communion is to despair of his salvation: God forbid! how great soever may be his crime, he has always a resource, for the mercy of God is infinite, and if he seeks it with a contrite and humble heart he shall not be rejected; that precious blood which he has once profaned can again purify him. But what we are to conclude is that the crime of receiving unworthily is hard to expiate; that it rarely happens that a profaner of the body and blood of Christ enters into himself; and that we should take all possible care lest we fall into so grievous a misfortune, and that if it have happened recourse must be immediately had to the sacrament of penance.

EXAMPLE.—The sacred books present to us but one instance of an unworthy communion, being that of Judas, who received his God into a soul defiled by avarice, and already occupied with the project of betraying him. Satan

immediately enters into him; he sells his kind master, delivers him over to his enemies; neither the kiss of the Son of God, nor the sweet name of *friend* by which he addresses him, having power to touch his hardened heart. What was the end of that monster, the object of just and endless execration? He fell into despair and became his own executioner; he hung himself, and his bowels burst asunder and fell out, as though they could not contain the God who had vouchsafed to enter therein. His guilty soul was cast into hell where it has now been for upwards of eighteen hundred years. Alas! those accumulated ages are but a point in the dread eternity of the infernal torments!

How terrible is this example! Weigh attentively all its circumstances: behold the blindness of that sacrilegious apostle,—his callousness, his despair,—and learn therefrom that it is a heinous crime to communicate unworthily, since it draws after it such frightful consequences.

ARTICLE V.

OF FREQUENT COMMUNION.

THE Apostle St. Paul, after having depicted in the strongest terms the enormity of an unworthy communion, does not conclude: "Keep away from the holy Eucharist;" but he says: "Let a man, therefore, prove himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." The fear of communicating unworthily ought not, therefore, to deter us from communion, but engage us seriously to examine our dispositions, and redouble our watchfulness over ourselves so that we may be able frequently to approach the holy table with good dispositions. To communicate unworthily is, doubtless, a great evil; but not to communicate at all is not less an evil, and both lead inevitably to eternal death. The Eucharist is necessary for maintaining and preserving the spiritual life of grace; for the strength of the soul, like that of the body, is gradually worn away, if it be not kept up. The means of effecting this is the divine Eucharist, established for that purpose by Jesus Christ. "If ye eat not," says He himself, "the flesh of the Son of man, and drink

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not his blood, ye shall have no life in you." He has instituted this sacrament under the form of bread and wine, to intimate that we ought to receive it often: the holy Eucharist ought to be the ordinary nourishment of our soul, as bread and wine are of our body. In the first ages of Christianity, this truth was well understood, and the primitive Christians regarded the Eucharist as the daily bread of the children of God; they partook of it, indeed, every day, and feared nothing so much as the being deprived of it. We should endeavour to have the same dispositions as they had, and seek to imitate their fervor. And let it not be said that frequent communion was then usual, but that the discipline of the Church has changed. I grant that Christians have changed, and that fervor has diminished, but the spirit of the Church is always the same. The holy Council of Trent says that it would wish all the faithful, as often as they assisted at the sacrifice of the mass, to communicate not only spiritually, but by the actual reception of the Eucharist. Another council expresses a similar desire in these terms: "We observe, with sorrow, that there are Christians so negligent as to communicate but once in the year; and for that reason we exhort priests and all who exercise the ministry of speech, to instruct the faithful as to the frequent communion formerly in use; on the marvellous effects which it then produced, and that there is no means so well adapted to restore amongst us the happy days of the primitive Church as frequent communion."

If the Church, therefore, only binds the faithful to one communion in the year, it is not because she believes that annual communion sufficient to preserve in her children the spiritual life of grace; she does not wish to use threats in order to induce them to communicate more frequently, fearful of thereby multiplying transgressions or sacrileges; but she would desire that they might be pure enough to receive frequently,—as often, in short, as would be necessary to preserve, by virtue of the Eucharist, the life and health of the soul. If we love God, we will often unite ourselves with him; he invites us to that sacred banquet. "Come to me," says he, "all you who are sore and heavy laden, and I will relieve you; come with confidence, and fear nothing: come

to me, who am your father, and I will give you the most touching pledge of my affection ; come to me, who am your God and I will enrich you with my most precious graces." The safest course for a faithful Christian in this respect, is to confess often, at least on the approach of the great festivals, and to follow the advice of his confessor as regards the more or less frequent use of the holy communion. Another practice which is extremely advantageous is, to make a spiritual communion from time to time ; in order to do so we have but to recollect ourselves a moment, make an act of desire of the actual communion, and invite Jesus Christ to enter our soul, after having adored him in the most holy sacrament of the altar.

EXAMPLE.—The young Albini, not having attained the prescribed age for making his first communion, contented himself with sighing incessantly after the happy day when he might receive his God under the Eucharistic veils, and he omitted nothing in preparing himself for so holy an action. He had so lively a horror for sin, that he avoided even the appearance of evil. He often said that he would not suffer the devil to enter his heart before Jesus Christ, and he had a constant desire to instruct himself in all that concerns the adorable sacrament of our altars. He not only sought to remember the words of the catechism, but even to take in their entire meaning. The innocence of his life, his extreme desire to receive the holy communion, and the diligence with which he prepared for it, induced his director to admit him to the holy table earlier than children are usually received. This news was the most delightful that he could have heard ; he thanked his confessor with transports of joy, and from that moment his sole care was to purify his heart more and more, so as to prepare for Jesus Christ a dwelling not altogether unworthy of him. With that intention he would make a retreat before the time of his communion, during which he made a general confession of his whole life. To see the torrents of tears which he poured forth, and the lively sorrow by which he was penetrated, one would have said that there had never been a greater sinner than he on the earth. Yet he had never stained

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his baptismal robe by any mortal sin ; but the light of grace by which he was enlightened, caused him to regard even the slightest faults as so many hideous monsters, and he could not console himself because of having offended a God who vouchsafed even to become the food of his soul.

It was in such sentiments as these that he passed the time of his retreat. The joyful moment for which he had so long sighed, arrived at last, and he had the happiness of receiving his God ; but it would be impossible to express the lively sentiments of piety which animated him when receiving the communion. He wept and sighed, and broke out into transports of love and gratitude. " Yes, my God," he cried, " since you have had the goodness to give yourself to me, I will give myself entirely to you ; since you have united yourself so closely with me, nothing shall henceforward separate me from you. I should be the most ungrateful of all creatures if I used any reserve towards a God who has loved me beyond measure."

Nor was this one of those passing fits of devotion which vanish with the occasion that called them forth. Albini never forgot that blissful day, nor the engagements contracted with his God. The communion was for him a salutary nourishment whereby he sensibly grew in virtue and in piety. Very far from satiating his desires, this celestial food served only, on the contrary, to redouble their ardour, and ever after he never failed to receive every fortnight, well knowing that the divine Eucharist is as necessary to our soul as earthly food is to our body, and that it is impossible to maintain ourselves constantly in the ways of innocence and true piety without the frequent use of that adorable sacrament.

The Virtuous Scholars.

ARTICLE VI.

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

THE Eucharist is not merely a sacrament wherein Jesus Christ gives himself to us to be our spiritual sustenance, but it is also a sacrifice in which he offers himself for us to his eternal Father. Our Lord is not contented with offering

himself once on the cross for our redemption, but he would leave to his Church a sacrifice to represent that of the cross, which might perpetuate the memory thereof till the end of the world, and apply its merits unto us; it was for this purpose that, in his last supper, on the very night that he was betrayed, he offered up to God his Father his body and his blood, under the form of bread and wine; he gave them to his apostles, whom he then established as priests of the new law, and by these words: "*do this in remembrance of me,*" he commanded them, and their successors in the priesthood, to offer them up, as the Catholic Church has always understood and taught.

This sacrifice is the renewal and the commemorative figure of that of the cross: the figure, because the blood of Christ appears to be separated from his body, which apparent separation recalls the memory of the real separation; the renewal, because it is the same victim, the same host, the same sacrificer, and consequently the same sacrifice, offered upon the cross; the difference that exists between them is only in the manner: on the cross he was offered up by himself, whilst on the altar he offers himself through the ministry of the priest: on the cross he was offered up in a bloody manner, but the sacrifice of the altar is an unbloody one. Such is the sacrifice of the Christian religion, the august sacrifice which alone comprises all the advantages which were but prefigured by the various sacrifices of the old law; it is, at the same time, a sacrifice of adoration; by which we acknowledge the supreme dominion of God over all his creatures; a sacrifice of thanksgiving, whereby we thank him for his blessings; a sacrifice of impetration, by which we obtain yet other favours; and a sacrifice of propitiation whereby we appease his justice.

The oblation which Christ makes of himself to his Father comprises the most perfect homage which can be rendered to his infinite Majesty, and nothing can move him more strongly to look upon us with an eye of mercy, by placing before him the cruel death to which his beloved Son voluntarily submitted, to reconcile sinners with Him.

Instructed in the mystery of the Eucharist, persuaded that Christ is really present on the altar, where he renews

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and perpetuates the memory of his death, with what piety and gratitude should we assist at this august sacrifice! If we had been present on Calvary when our Saviour was immolated for us, what would have been our sentiments! Should we not have been penetrated with sorrow, compunction and love, in sight of so touching a spectacle? Since the sacrifice of the mass is the same as that of the cross, it ought to inspire us with the same sentiments. We should take care to unite ourselves in spirit with the priest who offers it up, and conform our intentions to his. He offers it, to render to God the worship which is due to him, to obtain the remission of our sins, to draw down upon us the graces of which we are in need, and to thank God for all those which we have already received.

It is to God alone that the sacrifice is offered, because it is the homage of our dependence and of our servitude. We only commemorate the saints in the course of the mass, to praise and thank God for the victories which his grace has enabled them to obtain, and to ask them to unite their prayers with ours. This sacrifice is offered not only for the living, but also for all those who have died in the state of grace, and who may have still some sins to expiate in purgatory. The Church prays for them, through the merits of this sacrifice, that their souls may be relieved in the pains which they undergo, and may be freed therefrom to enter upon eternal life. This custom of offering up the holy sacrifice for the dead is of remote antiquity, and comes from the tradition of the apostles.

EXAMPLES.—A certain mother of a family, who had contracted the excellent habit of every day assisting at mass, heard it in this way: on Sunday, to accomplish the precept of the Church; on Monday, for the souls in purgatory; on Tuesday, for the conversion of sinners; on Wednesday, for the perseverance of the just; on Thursday to acquit herself of her duty towards Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; on Friday, in honour of his Passion; and on Saturday to place herself and her family under the protection of Mary. She asserted that she had derived the very greatest advantages from this pious practice.



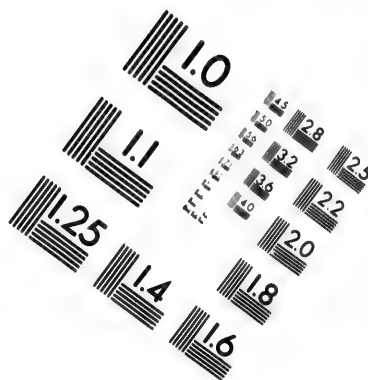
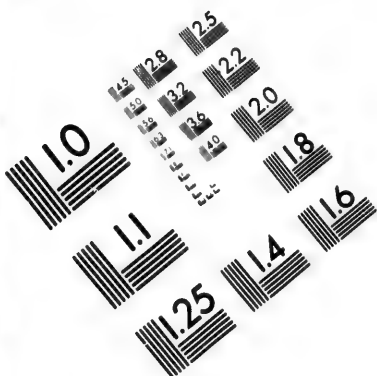
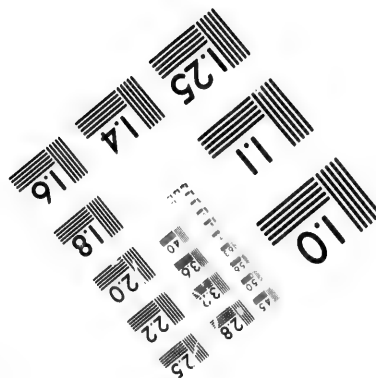
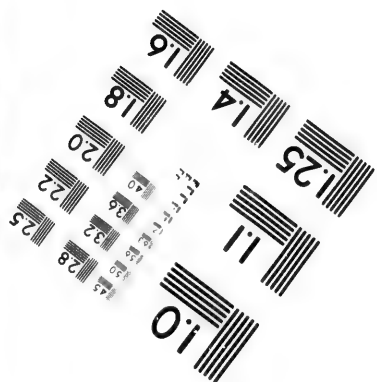
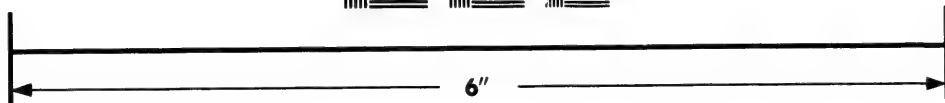
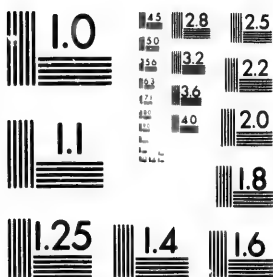


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William Ruffin, a young scholar whose life might serve as a model for Christian youth, found his greatest pleasure in serving mass. He discharged this delightful duty with touching piety and with such angelic fervour that no one could look upon him without being moved to devotion. It may be truly said that by this holy exercise he obtained from God so many graces that he was raised to a high degree of sanctity.

Life of Ruffin, by the Abbé CARRON.

CHAPTER VI.

OF EXTREME UNCTION.

God, who is infinitely good, has not only provided us with salutary assistance for the course of our life, and a state of health, but he has also established a sacrament to console us in the time of sickness, and especially at the approach of death, when temptations are more violent and more dangerous. This sacrament is called *Extreme Unction*, being the last unction that a Christian receives. The first unction is made in baptism, the second in confirmation, and the last in any dangerous malady. Jesus Christ has instituted the Extreme Unction for the spiritual and corporal relief of the sick. It is explained to us by the apostle St. James, in the following terms: "If any one be sick amongst you, let him call in the priests of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man: the Lord will comfort him, and if he be guilty of any sin, it shall be remitted." From these words we learn that two things are essential to this sacrament: the unction, and the prayer which accompanies it: the unction is made with oil of olives, consecrated by the bishop on holy Thursday. The holy oil is applied to each of the five senses, in order to purify them from the sins of which they have been the medium. This is the prayer which the priest pronounces while making the application: "May the Lord, by this unction with sacred oil, and through his great mercy, forgive thee all the sins which thou hast committed by sight, by

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smell, and by the other senses." A prayer both powerful and efficacious, since our Lord hath promised, by the mouth of his Apostle, that he will always hear it.

This sacrament has three principal effects: the first is to strengthen the sick person against the temptations of the devil, and the horror of death; it confirms their faith and confidence in God, and by that means fortifies them against the attacks of the devil; it excites in the heart the desire and the hope of possessing God, and thus fortifies against the fear of death; the more ardent is this desire, and firmer this hope, the less they fear to die.

The second effect of Extreme Unction is to efface the traces of sin, together with the sins themselves, if there are still any to be expiated; hence it is that this sacrament was called by the fathers of the church, the perfection and completion of penance. By the traces or remains of sin is understood a weakness and languor of soul which continues even after the sin has been forgiven, which produces a lingering attachment to the things of the earth, and prevents us from having a taste for spiritual things; this sacrament removes that weakness, by detaching us from the world and making us desire heaven. It also remits venial sin, and even those mortal sins which may have been forgotten, or which the sick person is unable to confess, provided, nevertheless, that there be sincere and true contrition; but, if possible, recourse must be previously had to the sacrament of penance, for Extreme Unction is a sacrament of the living, and ought to be received in the state of grace.

The third effect of Extreme Unction is to restore health to the sick, if it be consistent with their salvation; it must not therefore be deferred till the last extremity; it is no time to ask for health when one is about to breathe his last, for that would be to tempt God, since the person's recovery could not be effected without an evident miracle. It suffices to be dangerously ill, in order to receive Extreme Unction, and when it is received with sound and free judgment one is better disposed for its reception, and derives much more profit therefrom. Besides, in deferring it till the last moment, one runs the risk of dying without it, for it often happens that they who thus postpone it, are finally

prevented by death from receiving it at all. Although this sacrament be not of absolute necessity, we are nevertheless bound to receive it when we can, for it is the ordinary means of obtaining a happy death, those who neglect it disobey a precept of Christ, and they wilfully deprive themselves of the graces attached to this sacrament, and expose themselves to the danger of a bad death, which is the greatest of all misfortunes.

EXAMPLES.—A father was once dangerously ill. He had a daughter of about eight years old, who had profitted well by the instructions she had received at Catechism. Being alone with her father, she said to him: "Papa! papa! you are very sick, and the doctor says that you may perhaps die to-morrow. Mamma is crying in her own room, and they are all trying to comfort her. I have heard the priest say at Catechism that it is a great sin to let any one die without confession, and no one ventures to tell you that you ought to make your confession.—"I thank you," said her father, "go, my child, go instantly for the priest. May the Lord bless you, for I shall be indebted to you after God, for my salvation."—The priest came, and gave the last sacraments to the sick man, who died next day. After having received the Sacraments, he several times exclaimed: "Without my little one—my dear child, what would have become of me?"

LASAUSSE.

St. Martin, archbishop of Tours, St. Louis, king of France, and Louis the Tall, another king of France, chose to receive Extreme Unction and yield their last breath, lying on haircloth, and with ashes laid upon them, by that means to excite within them sentiments of penance, and at the same time to inspire the assistants with similar feelings.

CHAPTER VII.

OF HOLY ORDERS.

THE five first sacraments are common to all the faithful, all are bound to receive them in the times and circum-

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stances wherein they require such assistance : the two following are peculiar to two states which, by their importance, and the great obligations they impose, have need of graces still more powerful. The Sacrament of Orders gives to the Church the pastors by whom she is governed ; it is by the imposition of hands and the accompanying prayer that they are set apart, as it were, from the rest of the faithful, and receive the power of announcing the Gospel, of administering the Sacraments, and of offering up the holy Sacrifice ; the power, in a word, of exercising the sacred ministry. Jesus Christ instituted this Sacrament when he called his Apostles, and said to them : " As my Father sent me, I also send you ; go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; receive ye the Holy Ghost ; whose sins ye remit they shall be remitted, and whose sins ye retain, they are retained : " and again, when after having established the Sacrifice of his body and blood ; he added : " Do this in remembrance of me."

Holy Orders is, therefore, a Sacrament which gives power to fulfil the ecclesiastical functions, together with grace to exercise them in holiness : the Apostles received not this power for themselves only, but in order that they might impart it to others. We see, accordingly, in the Sacred Scriptures, that they ordained bishops, priests, and deacons by the imposition of hands ; and we read in Ecclesiastical History that the first bishops established by the Apostles, ordained others to be their successors ; and this succession, which has never been interrupted, will continue in the Church till the end of ages.

The priesthood is attained by several degrees or different orders. There are four Orders which are called minor : namely, those of porter, reader, exorcist, and acolyte ; and three major ; namely, sub-deacon, deacon, and priest. A state so holy requires great dispositions in those who would embrace it ; the first is, that he be called thereto, and takes it not upon himself to enter. If there be no state into which it is lawful to enter without having consulted God to know whether it be one's vocation, that precaution is still more necessary when the question is of a state whose functions

are so holy and so sublime. "It is not you who have chosen me," said Christ to his Apostles, "but it is I who have established you, to the end that ye may go and bear fruit." The second disposition for entering upon the ecclesiastical state, is to be inspired with zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men; not to them who enter this holy state with merely human motives, consulting only in interest or ambition, and proposing only to enrich themselves and be enabled to live more comfortably, and in a more respectable position!—The third disposition is to be of irreproachable morals; it would be, indeed, desirable if the recipient of Holy Orders had preserved his baptismal innocence; at least that he may have long before recovered it, and led an edifying and blameless life. Finally, the fourth disposition is to be in a state of grace; it would be a horrible sacrilege to receive a sacrament so holy with a conscience defiled by mortal sin.

EXAMPLE.—Do you know what it is to be a priest, you who smile with contempt, and are irritated by the mere mention of the word? A priest is, by virtue of his office, the friend, the living providence of all the wretched; the consoler of the afflicted, the defender of the unprotected, the support of the widow, the father of the orphan, the repairer of all the disorders and of all the evils begotten by your passions, and your fatal doctrines. His entire life is but one long and heroic course of devotion to the happiness of his fellow-creatures. Which of you would consent to exchange, as he does, the domestic joys, the pleasures, and the wealth which men seek so eagerly, for obscure toil, painful duties, functions of which the exercise rends the very heart, and revolts the senses, and make so many sacrifices to gather no other fruit than disdain, ingratitude, and insult.

You are still fast asleep in your bed, when the man of charity, long before the dawn, has begun again the daily series of his beneficent labours. He has relieved the poor, visited the sick, wiped away the tears of the unhappy, or called forth those of repentance, instructed the ignorant, fortified the weak, and confirmed in virtue souls whom the storm of passion had disturbed. After a day filled up with

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such actions, the evening comes, but it brings not repose,—just at the time when pleasure calls you to theatres, balls, and parties, some one is hurrying for the priest; a Christian has reached the term of his existence, he is dying, and perhaps of a contagious malady; it matters not, the good pastor will not suffer that soul to depart this world without imparting relief to its anguish, without investing it with the consolations of Hope and Faith; without praying beside the death-bed to the God who died for that soul, and who even then gives it, in the sacrament of love, a sure pledge of immortality.

To the eye of faith he is more than all this; he is the minister of Christ on earth, and charged, as his representative, with the exercise of functions which were not even confided to the angels.

Such, then, is the priest; not such as prejudice and aversion would fain depict him, but as he really appears amongst you.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY.

MARRIAGE has been instituted from the beginning of the world, when God gave to man as a companion the woman whom he had formed of one of his ribs, and by a special blessing granted unto them fruitfulness. To render this first institution still more sacred, Jesus Christ has raised it to the dignity of a sacrament, attaching to it a peculiar grace to secure that indissoluble union, and to sanctify those who contract it; he has rendered it the image and the sign of a great mystery, of his intimate and eternal union with his Church; thence, marriage has become a source of spiritual blessings for those who receive it with Christian dispositions.

Matrimony is, therefore, a sacrament which gives grace to sanctify the lawful companionship of man and woman. It is a certain truth that those who contract marriage after having consulted God, and with Christian intentions, receive through that sacrament graces to sanctify themselves by the

faithful fulfilment of the duties of their state. Before deciding on embracing this state, we should address our fervent prayers to God that he may make known to us whether we are called thereto; without that precaution, we would contract rashly and contrary to the will of God, an irrevocable engagement unblessed by him, and thereby expose our salvation to imminent danger. God never fails to make known his will to those who invoke him with all their heart. The advice of parents should also be taken; they seek the advancement of their children, and know better how it is to be obtained; and their counsel should be followed rather than a blind inclination, in an affair so important, on which depends our happiness for time and for eternity.

There are three principal dispositions for receiving the sacrament of marriage: the first is to receive it with a conscience purified from all mortal sin, because matrimony, being a sacrament of the living, the spiritual life of grace is supposed to exist in those who receive it. The Council of Trent even exhorts persons who would enter upon this state, to approach the holy Eucharist in order to draw down upon themselves the blessing of Heaven. The second disposition is to receive it with the intention of doing the will of God, and serving him in that state. We should propose to ourselves to please God in all our actions, even the most common; but much more in making an engagement which is for life. "We are the children of saints," said the young Tobias to Sarah his wife, "and we ought not to marry like the Pagans, who know not God." Let those who think themselves called to the marriage state, enter therein solely with a view to sanctify themselves, and to fulfil all its obligations. The third disposition for the sacrament of marriage is to receive it with modesty, decency, and the other virtues suitable to the sanctity of the sacrament, by carefully avoiding all that might infringe on the rules of the most exact propriety. To receive the nuptial blessing with an immodest demeanour, would be to offend God at the very foot of his altar, and profane a sacrament which should only be approached with much piety and respect.

Married people have four obligations to fulfil: they are to live together in a holy companionship and in perfect una-

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nimity, mutually to keep the conjugal faith which they pledged to each other before God's holy altar, to assist each other in every necessity, and finally to give their children a Christian education, teaching them early to pray to God, and piously to perform the other duties of religion; often repeating to them the maxims of the Gospel, giving them good example in all things, and watching over their conduct so as to remove them from all that could lead them to evil.

EXAMPLE.—A young physician of Paris received the sacrament of marriage in 1829, under the most edifying circumstances.

He was introduced by a friend to a family much respected for their virtues, and he was soon permitted to hope for the hand of their only daughter, who was as pious as the rest of her family. This young lady was soon after engaged to the doctor, whose modesty equalled his learning and skill. The nuptial ceremony was soon after to take place, when the young man called one day and asked his intended mother-in-law if he might not be permitted to speak a few words in private to Mademoiselle Emilie.—“It is quite impossible, sir!” she replied, politely, “my daughter has not been very well these last two days, and she requires to be left undisturbed.”—“But, madam! it is a painful deprivation to me not to be allowed to see your daughter; I have only had the pleasure of seeing her three or four times in company, so that I have not yet had an opportunity of expressing my own sentiments, or ascertaining hers.”—“Your entreaties are painful to me,” said the lady, “but really you cannot see my daughter.”—“And yet I have something of importance to say to her.”—“In that case I will call her, if you desire it, and you can speak to her in my presence; my daughter has never been left alone with any man.”—“But am not I to be her husband very soon?”—“Then, sir, my daughter will be no longer mine to controul; but while she is, I must fulfil my duty—the duty of a prudent, and Christian mother.”—“Ah, madam!” exclaimed the physician, “I find that I must confide to you my real intentions. Educated myself, by religious parents, I have

ever remained faithful to that holy religion which actuates your estimable conduct. The indifference which unhappily exists amongst certain classes may have very naturally inspired you with distrust; but, far from having such sentiments, I make it my pride and glory to follow in all things the dictates of Faith, for the more I study them, the more highly do I esteem and respect them. If I have insisted so much on having a private interview with your daughter, it is because I wished to sound her dispositions in that respect, and to beg of her to prepare herself by a general confession and the reception of the holy Eucharist, for receiving with the nuptial blessing all the graces attached thereto.

On hearing this, the mother could not restrain her tears; she threw herself into the arms of the virtuous physician, and said, as she pressed him to her heart: "Well, my son, we shall all communicate together; go and see my daughter, and tell her that I have called you my son. Go, pious young man, your sentiments assure me that both you and my daughter shall be happy."

The excellent young man did not stop there. Every day, for eight days, he had the holy sacrifice offered up to obtain a blessing on his union. But the most touching sight of all was to see, on the day of the marriage, the young couple approaching the holy table together, with the worthy father and mother of the young man, (both shedding tears of joy,) and the mother and grandmother of the bride, all of whom received the communion from the hands of the priest who blessed the marriage.

What a beautiful example for young people! what a lesson for so many parents who are either indifferent or irreligious!—Ah! if every union resembled this, how happy and how tranquil would society be!

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SECOND TREATISE.

ON PRAYER.

CHAPTER I.

OF PRAYER IN GENERAL.

ARTICLE I.

NECESSITY OF PRAYER.

PRAYER is the second means of obtaining grace; it is an elevation of the heart and mind to God, offering to him our homage, and begging of him all that is necessary for us. Prayer is an indispensable duty, and cannot be omitted without sin; Jesus Christ has made it an express commandment, and the precept is several times repeated in the Gospel: "*Watch,*" said he, "*and pray; we ought always to pray, and not to faint.*"

Hence, the reproach which he makes to his disciples: "As yet ye have asked nothing in my name; ask, and ye shall receive." He himself has practised what he commands us to do, since he often passed whole nights in prayer, or rather, so to speak, his entire life was one continued prayer. Christ had certainly no need of praying for himself; but he would give us the example, and thereby engage us to practise that holy exercise: we had need that he should pray for us, and that he should show us the obligation of prayer. Salvation is promised but to Prayer,—it is only possible through prayer, and is granted only to perseverance in prayer. This holy exercise is then of indispensable necessity; and even though the Gospel did not make it a positive law to pray, and pray without ceasing, the sense of our own misery would alone suffice to prove its necessity. Do not the ever-present wants of our souls and bodies continually warn us to have recourse to Him.

who alone can remedy them? Is it not the lot of the wretched to bewail, and to solicit relief? Our indigence is extreme, and the treasures which we seek are of infinite value. God is ready to grant them to us, and he not only permits us to ask them, but even commands us to do so; not that he is ignorant of our wants; he knows them better than we ourselves do; but yet he requires that we should expose them to him, to make us desire with more ardour the blessings he has in store for us, and to render us by that very desire more capable of receiving them. The desire of the everlasting treasures is inflamed by the holy exercise of prayer, and the more ardent that desire, the more do we receive from God; he gives food to the hungry; and sends those away empty who, believing themselves rich, imagine that they require nothing from him. Were God to grant us his favours without our asking, we should be tempted to attribute them to ourselves; but when, after having felt our misery and our impotence, we apply to him, we then cannot dissemble to ourselves our entire dependence; we are compelled to acknowledge that we can do nothing without him, and that whatever we receive is the gift of his pure liberality; by this humble avowal of our extreme indigence, we are disposed for receiving his most abundant blessings. Let us apply ourselves, then, to this holy exercise; let us not imagine that, to fulfil this essential duty, it is sufficient to employ a few minutes, and to pass the rest of our time without thinking of God; we must frequently have recourse to prayer, and persevere therein. God chooses to be solicited, urged, importuned; he never tires of hearing us; the treasures of his grace are infinite, and nothing is more agreeable to him than to be asked for them—asked incessantly. Earthly kings do not permit every one to speak to them; that is a favour which they grant but to their courtiers and favourites, and on certain occasions; but it is not so with our God, who suffers us to address him at all times, to present to him our wants, and implore his assistance; this he even exhorts us to do freely, and if we fail to supplicate him, he is even offended with us. What an honour it is for a vile creature thus to approach its God, and communicate to him its thoughts, its uneasiness, its desires,

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with a holy freedom, and a tender confidence! Would it not be despising his goodness if we profited not by the favour which he ever grants us of hearing us at all times, and of interesting himself in all that we desire?

EXAMPLES.—“Prayer is the door by which the Lord is pleased to dispense his graces,” said St. Theresa. “If this door be closed, what is to become of us? Alas!” added she, “I have myself experienced this. I had the misfortune of giving up mental prayer, and I became every day less of a Christian. If I had not resumed that holy exercise, I was lost for ever.

Life of St. Theresa.

David, although placed on the throne, and busied with the affairs of his kingdom, was accustomed to pray seven times in the day, as he himself tells us; and he arose in the night to pray. Animated by the Spirit of God, he composed sublime canticles, which are still chanted in the Church of the new law.

Several great princes, such as Charlemagne, St. Louis, and St. Henry, emperor, religiously observed the practice of reciting every day the office of the Church, and also of rising during the night to assist at matins.

A respectable author, who wrote under the influence of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, then in all its novelty, as in the flush of its hatred of Christianity, has made the following reflection: “Amongst the Romans, on sitting down to table, the master of the house took a cup of wine and poured some drops on the ground; these libations were the homage which they rendered to Providence. The Christians have been always accustomed, before and after meals, to pray to God, thanking him for the repast which they were about to take, or which they had taken. Is it not very wrong, and, at the same time, very ridiculous that in France, during the last fifty years, this so natural act of gratitude and of religion should be regarded by people of the great world as a little puerile ceremony, an old fashion unworthy the observance of an enlightened age? Our inferiors, when they learn from our example to be ungrateful to God, will accustom themselves to be the same towards us.”

ARTICLE II.

ON THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

ALL is promised to prayer; and when properly made, it obtains every blessing. This is a truth repeated at almost every page of the Scripture, and the promise of Christ is formal on that head. "*Ask and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you.—Whatsoever ye ask in prayer, believe that ye shall receive, and it shall be given you.*" He is not even content with assuring us that prayer, if well made, is always heard; he has even ratified it with an oath: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father, in my name, he will give unto you." Finally, to dissipate all shadow of doubt, he subjoins this proof, which is very fit to revive the most desponding heart: "Does a father give a stone to his son when he asks for bread; and if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye, then, perverse as ye are, know how to give good things to your children, how much more will your heavenly father give them to those who ask them of him." After a promise so formal, one must have lost all faith, before they can doubt the efficacy of prayer. If we depend on the promises of an upright man, how much more may we rely on the promise, nay, the oath of Jesus Christ, who is truth itself! It would be doing him an injury to let distrust enter one's mind. Ah! whence could that distrust arise? is it from our own unworthiness? But is not the goodness of God purely gratuitous; and is not the very acknowledgment of our unworthiness a title whereby we obtain access to a mercy which the greatest crimes cannot exhaust, and which invites the greatest sinners to draw near with confidence? And is it not in the name of Jesus Christ that we pray? Is not our unworthiness covered by his infinite merits? No; never has the prayer of the sinner been rejected, when he humbles himself before God;—it ascends to the throne of the Eternal, and is sure to draw down blessings on the soul whence it arose.

"Is there any one," says the prophet, "who, having invoked the Lord, hath been despised? Our fathers called

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upon the Lord, and they were delivered; they hoped in the Lord, and they were not confounded: whosoever invoceth the name of the Lord shall be saved." God is honoured by this full, entire, and boundless confidence; it is a homage rendered to his power, to his goodness, and to his fidelity in his promises: it obtains all, for God can refuse it nothing. Moses prays on the mountain, and the enemies of God's people are defeated; Judith prays, and her country is delivered; the pious king Ezechias prays, and God revokes the sentence of death which he had pronounced against him; the publican prays in the temple, and he goes thence justified; the sinful woman prays, and her sins are remitted; the good thief prays on the cross, and although he was laden with the most enormous crimes, he yet obtains pardon. This is the reason why St. John said: "That which excites our confidence in God, is that he hears us in all that we ask conformable to his will; for we know that he will hear us in all whatsoever we ask of him; and we know it, because we have already received the favours which we asked." Let us then, never assert our own weakness when we are exhorted to the practice of virtue, let us never again say that we are carried away by our natural tendency to evil, or that we cannot resist the violence of our passions. We can pray, and prayer will sustain our feebleness; we can pray, and prayer will fortify us against our evil inclinations; we can pray, and prayer will moderate the violence of our passions. We have need of grace, in order to practise the lessons of wisdom: let us ask, and God will grant us that grace. "If any one wants wisdom," says the apostle St. James, "let him ask it of God, who giveth freely to all, and wisdom shall be given him." No one ever fails then to obtain help from God, provided it be asked in a fitting manner, and if we obtain it not, the fault is altogether our own: it is because we do not apply to God with that confidence which wins every blessing.

EXAMPLE.—St. John Chrysostom fears not to assert that prayer is in some manner more powerful than God himself, since it succeeds in bending his will, and in making

him retract the sentence he had pronounced against us. Of this we have an example: The Israelites having transgressed the law of God, and set up in the desert a golden calf as the object of their worship, God, ever clement, seemed to fear the efficacy of the intercession of Moses. "Let me alone," said he to his servant, "seek not to turn me from cutting off that rebellious people." Nevertheless, being overcome by the earnest entreaties of Moses, as the holy Scripture tells us, he did not execute his intentions in regard to the Hebrews.

ARTICLE III.

ON THE QUALITIES OF PRAYER.

THE great advantages of prayer depend altogether on the way in which we acquit ourselves of that duty. In order to pray well, we must pray in the name of Christ Jesus, and through his merits, for He has only promised to grant what we should ask in his name: hence it is that the Church terminates all her prayers, by these words: "*Through Jesus Christ our Lord.*" Secondly, we must pray with attention, that is to say, we must think of God, and the subject of our petition. God hears more willingly the voice of the heart than that of the mouth. Prayer is an elevation of the soul to God, so that we do not pray at all, when during prayer we think of anything but Him. It is true that distractions, if they be involuntary, do not render the prayer faulty; but God is offended by those for which we have given occasion through our own fault, or if we banish them not as soon as we have become conscious of their presence. In that case we should merit the reproach which God addressed to the Jews of old: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." Thirdly, we must pray with confidence. Our Lord, when promising to hear our prayers, always annexes this condition, that they be accompanied by faith; he usually said to those who applied to him for a cure: "*Be it done unto thee according to thy faith.*" Our confidence cannot be too firm, since it is founded on the power of

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God, who is able to do infinitely more than we ask of him; on his mercy which has no bounds; and on the infinite merits of Christ, in whose name we pray. What! should we address ourselves with all confidence, in our temporal necessities, to a friend who is rich, powerful, and of tried generosity, and yet fail to apply to God in even our spiritual wants, although he commands and invites us to have recourse to Him as to a good father! Is not such distrust injurious to his tenderness? What is the kindness of men compared to that of God?—Finally, we are to pray with perseverance; God, in his inexplicable wisdom and goodness, sometimes defers granting us what we ask of him; that delay is not a refusal, it is only a trial. By that he wishes to show us the value of his gifts, to increase the ardour of our desires, and dispose us to receive them in greater abundance. We ought not then to be discouraged, or fail to pray; we are commanded by Christ to do so; and to make us feel the necessity of perseverance, he makes use of two comparisons: the first is that of a widow, who, by her importunity, touches at last the heart of a cruel judge, and forces him to do her justice; the second is that of a man, who, in the middle of the night, goes to ask of his friend a loan of three loaves; the friend refuses to rise from his bed; but the other is not discouraged, and continues to knock at the door, redoubling his entreaties; his perseverance is rewarded, and he obtains what he asked. Our Lord concludes this parable by a lively and earnest exhortation, to pray without ceasing, together with a formal promise to grant to us whatever we shall ask with perseverance. The moment when we desist from prayer, is perhaps the very one which God had appointed for hearing us. Remember this well; it is prayer that asks, but only perseverance that obtains.

EXAMPLE.—"It was," says a pious writer, "the custom of a child of quality, to offer his heart to God, every morning with much fervour, and this was like the spirit of all the actions of the day. "If I fail," said he, "in this duty, as it has sometimes happened, I am dissipated all the rest of the day." This holy child, before he had completed his

twelfth year, died, and with sentiments of the rarest piety "My God!" he exclaimed from time to time during his last illness, "I have made an almost daily sacrifice of my heart to thee, I now offer up my life as the last sacrifice I can make."

Let us imitate this pious child, and be exact like him in offering our hearts to God every morning, that we may die, as he did, an edifying death.

ARVISENET.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

ARTICLE I.

ON WHAT IS TO BE ASKED OF GOD.

OUR Lord has himself taught us what we are to beg of God, and the order in which it is to be asked. He has even vouchsafed to draw up the petition which we are to present to the Father in his name, and to leave us an excellent form of prayer, which is thence called *The Lord's Prayer*. "Jesus Christ," says St. Cyprian, "amongst other salutary advices and precepts, which he hath given to his people in order to guide them to salvation, has prescribed a formula of prayer, to the end that we may be the more readily heard by the Father, by addressing him in the very words which his Son hath taught us. Let us, therefore, pray," adds this holy doctor, "as our master and our God hath directed us; that prayer must be pleasing to God which comes from himself, and strikes his ear through the words of Christ; let the Father recognize in our prayer the words of his divine Son. Since Jesus Christ is our advocate with his Father, let us make use of the very words of our Mediator; he assures us that the Father will grant whatever is asked in his name; how much more willingly if asked, not only in his name, but in his own very words!" The Church, accordingly, makes continual use of that divine prayer; by it she begins and ends all her offices; she

introduces it particularly in the holy Sacrifice of the mass. The faithful should recite it daily, morning and evening, and recall it often to their minds through the course of the day.

The Lord's Prayer is composed of a short preface, and seven petitions or requests, of which the three first relate to God, and the other four concern ourselves; it contains all that we can desire and ask of God; it is the rule by which we are to form our sentiments and our desires. We may, indeed, make use of other words in our prayers, but we are to ask nothing of God save what is contained in this model; any request that is not consistent with it, would be unworthy a Christian, and could not be agreeable to God. The preface consists of these words: "*Our Father, who art in Heaven,*"—Jesus Christ has thrown into these few words all that is most capable of engaging God to hear us, and of inspiring within ourselves sentiments of respect, confidence, and love.

We call God our Father, for so has Christ instructed us to do. God is indeed our father by creation, since He has given us life, and formed us to his own image; he is still more our father by the grace of regeneration, seeing that in Baptism he adopted us as his children in Christ Jesus. "Consider," says the Apostle St. John, "what love the Father has had for us, since he would have us called his children, and really be so!" "Because ye are children," adds St. Paul, "God has sent into your hearts the spirit of his Son, who cries, *My Father, my Father!*" Oh, name full of sweetness and delight! what love, what gratitude, and what confidence should it not excite in your heart! If it be true that God is your Father, can you fear that your prayer will be rejected when you remind him of a name by which he takes pleasure in hearing us address him? What does He not grant to a child who prays to Him, after he has received him into the number of his children by a grace which anticipated his prayers and desires. Fear only that by your disobedience you may render yourself unworthy to be called the child of God; that alone can obstruct the flow of his grace and the effect of your prayers. Each of us says, when addressing God: "*Our Father,*" and not *My Father*, because having all the same father, and expecting

from him the same inheritance, we are not only to pray for ourselves, but for all the faithful, who are our brethren. By that we understand that it is not in our own name we pray, but in that of Jesus Christ, and in union with the whole body of His Church, whose members we are. We add: "*Who art in heaven,*" for although God is every where in his immensity, we nevertheless consider heaven as the throne of his glory; it is in heaven that he puts forth all his magnificence, and reveals himself fully to his elect without the shadow of a cloud to obscure his brightness. It is to heaven that we ourselves are called; heaven is our country, and the inheritance destined for us by our Father. When we kneel then in prayer, let us raise our thoughts and our desires to heaven; let us unite with the society of blessed spirits, and excite in our hearts the hope and the desire of possessing God.

EXAMPLES.—"It is now," said St. Francis of Assisium, after having been disinherited by his father because of his great liberality towards the poor, "It is now that I can indeed say: 'Our Father, who art in heaven.'"

Oh! how noble is the state and quality of a Christian!—God is his Father!

A certain young shepherd had got a habit of praying while he tended his flock. Being asked if he did not sometimes feel weary of remaining so long alone in the fields, he answered that his *Pater* served to shorten the days and make them pass away pleasantly, because he found it a never-failing source of consoling thoughts and good sentiments, so that at times it took him a whole week to meditate upon it from beginning to end. M. DE LA PALME.

St. Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, having fallen sick, did nothing else for a whole night, but recite the Lord's Prayer. The servant who waited upon him thought it necessary to represent to him that the continual repetition of that prayer for so long a time, would certainly do him harm. He replied: "No such thing: the repetition of a prayer so sweet cannot do me any harm, but on the contrary, I feel it doing me good."

LASAUSSÉ

ARTICLE II.

HALLOWED BE THY NAME.

It is very proper that our first desire and our first petition should have the glory of God for their object. If we are his children, nothing should be dearer to us than the honour and glory of our Father. We commence, then, by begging that his name may be hallowed, that is to say, honoured and glorified. The name of God is of itself holy, and can acquire no new degree of sanctity; but it is frequently dishonoured by the discourse and by the conduct of men. What we ask by these words is that the holy name of God may be known, praised, and adored by all his creatures, and that every tongue may bless him; that all the universe may render to his divine Majesty that homage which is due to him, and that his glory may extend throughout all the countries of the earth. There are, besides, infidel nations who know nothing of God; we pray him to draw them forth from the darkness in which they are enveloped, and to call them to the admirable light of the Gospel. There are heretics, too, who know him, but who worship him not as he would be worshipped; we beg that they may renounce their errors, that they may recognize the truth, and that they may return to the bosom of that true Church, beyond whose pale there is no salvation. Finally, there are bad Christians who do not serve God, but outrage him by their sins, profaning and blaspheming his awful name; we pray that they may be converted to God by sincere repentance, and that they may begin to glorify him by an edifying life. We pray, even, for the just, who already honour the name of God by their virtues, to the end that they may increase and persevere even to the end in righteousness; but what we ought more than all to desire is, that ourselves may hallow the name of God, by consecrating our entire life to glorify him and cause him to be glorified by others. We hallow the name of God by our thoughts in humbling ourselves profoundly before the divine Majesty, in never thinking of God nor of the things of God but with profound respect and religious veneration. We sanctify the name of God by our words, in never speak-

ing of Him but with a sentiment of interior adoration, and with a holy awe and fear. We hallow it by our actions in leading an exemplary life, whereby we incite others to praise God and serve him. We should, therefore, when repeating these words—*Hallowed be thy name*—have a sincere desire of promoting the glory of God as much as we possibly can; of inducing others to honour him, and of inspiring them by our discourse and example with a love of virtue, and a taste for piety. Without this desire, our heart would belie our mouth, and our words would bear witness against us, since we would not desire that which we appeared to ask. How would it be if, while begging of God that his name may be hallowed, we were of the number of those who incite others to offend him!

EXAMPLE.—A well-reared child cannot refrain from blessing the name of his father; all his pleasure is in hearing him praised; as to see him despised or spurned would give him the greatest pain. It is thus that a Christian should act towards God; his heart is animated with zeal for the glory of his Master; the indifference of some afflicts him, and the blasphemy of the impious freezes his soul with horror.

ARTICLE III.

THY KINGDOM COME.

By these words, *thy kingdom come*, we ask not that God may possess supreme power over all creatures,—that supremacy belongs to him necessarily and essentially; so that none may quit or escape from his domination. But there is another kingdom,—a region of grace with which we ought to co-operate, and which God makes depend on our consent;—a spiritual kingdom, wherein the soul, anticipated and assisted by grace, obeys voluntarily and willingly all the inspirations of God, conforms itself in all things and without reserve to his good pleasure, executes all his orders with fidelity, and has no other rule of action than his law and his divine commandments—a reign in which the heart

gives itself up to God, that he may possess it wholly, that he may govern it as he pleases, detaching it from all earthly affection, and from all human attachment. Such is the kingdom which we beg of God to establish within us. There is a kingdom of glory where God has prepared for his elect an immortal crown, where he gives himself to them that they may possess him for ever, where he pours upon them the plenitude of his riches and treasures, where he intoxicates them with the fulness of his blessings and with a torrent of delight, where they reign with him for ever and ever. This is the kingdom which we desire to see. What we ask, then, is that God may reign for the future over our hearts by grace, so that we may one day reign with him in his glory. In making this petition, we ought sincerely to desire that the reign of sin, the dominion of the passions may be destroyed within us, and that our mind, heart, and body may be submissive to God, so that He may be our sovereign and only master. If we are governed by bad habits and enslaved by vice, we must bewail that unhappy servitude, we must desire to break our bonds asunder, and enter into the liberty of the children of God; we must elevate our thoughts and our desires above the earth, which is for us but a place of banishment; so that we may sigh after our own country, where, in the enjoyment of eternal bliss, we shall reign with Christ. This ought to be the object of our hopes and desires, the consolation of our toils and troubles. The life of man so short in its duration, is filled with many miseries. How can we be attached to this miserable life,—we who are destined for life eternal? How can we apprehend the separation from this mortal and corruptible body, which prevents us from seeing God, and from joining the society of the blessed spirits? What greater good could happen to us than to quit this earthly prison, and to go forth from this visible world wherein we are exposed to so many dangers, where we are surrounded by snares, and at every moment run the risk of being lost? A good Christian has ever before his eyes the reward which he expects; he looks upon himself as a traveller here below; he is already a citizen of heaven through the liveliness of his faith and of his hope: sitting by the rivers of **Bab**

lon, he bitterly weeps over the remembrance of that heavenly Jerusalem, which is his true country; he often lifts up his eyes to that holy mountain, the dwelling of peace, the lot of his inheritance, where Christ is to crown him with glory and render him eternally happy.

EXAMPLE.—“The loss of my wealth is of small consequence to me,” said a holy martyr of the faith; “heaven remains to me, and is the true inheritance of my Father; none can take it from me; in a moment I am to take possession of it.”

ARTICLE IV.

THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.

IN order to obtain from our heavenly Father the inheritance which he reserves for us and the kingdom which is to be our portion, we must do his will. Our Lord himself tells us so, in the gospel: “Not every one who saith to me *Lord, Lord*, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they who do the will of my Father.” There is in God a will which is the rule of our duties, by which He commands good, and forbids evil: it was this will that the Prophet desired to execute when he said: “Teach me to do thy will, make me walk in the way of thy commandments, give to my heart a love for thy holy ordinances.” This divine will is manifested to us in the commandments of God and of the Church, and in the admonitions of our superiors. Thus, in saying to God: *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, we ask of him grace to observe his Law, to obey the Church and all who are placed over us; we desire that our obedience may be as perfect as is that of the angels and the blest in heaven. In heaven, all obey God, with promptness, with punctuality, and with eagerness. Is it thus that we obey him? Are we faithful in observing his commandments? Are we submissive to those who representing him, have authority over us? Yet this prayer is not seriously made but when the heart agrees with the tongue; it would be to speak falsely to God if we asked of him with our lips that which the heart does not desire.

There is a will of God which is the cause of the events of life: all that happens in the world is regulated by the will of God, and it depends not on us either to arrest or delay their course; our duty with regard to this divine will is to adore it, to submit to it, to accept with resignation the ills which it is pleased to send us; and to receive as from the hand of a father, the strokes it may inflict upon us. God permits these evils to befall us because he has merciful designs upon us. If he sends us afflictions, it is because he wishes to save us, and that they may help to expiate our sins. Hence it is rather in kindness than in justice that God punishes us in this life, which made the Apostle say that he chastises those whom he loves and strikes those whom he adopts as his children, thereby treating them as such; for, "what child is not chastised by his father?" What we ask, then, of God by the words, *thy will be done*, is that we may endure with entire submission all the trials wherewith he visits us; that, whatever happens, he may always find us patient, and resigned, and perfectly conformed both in mind and heart to the decrees of his Providence. We, therefore, can only say this prayer well by renouncing our own will, or endeavouring to renounce it; nothing is, in fact, more advantageous for us than to subject ourselves to the will of God. Man has fallen solely by preferring his own will to that of God, and he can only be saved by preferring the divine will to his own. "Take away self-will," said St. Bernard, "and there will be no more hell." Our Lord has set us the example of this perfect conformity to the will of God: "I came into the world," says He, "not to do my own will, but the will of my Father;" and again, "my meat is to do the will of Him who sent me." In fact the entire life of our blessed Saviour was but the exact fulfilment of the orders of his Father: if he was born in a stable, if he passed his youth in a most humiliating obscurity, and his latter years in the functions of a painful ministry, it was because his Father sent him, and that all his proceedings were based on the orders he had received from Him; finally, if he died the most ignominious of deaths, it was because he would have the will of his Father accomplished, rather than his own.

EXAMPLE.—"Obey the decrees of the rulers of the world!" said the pagan judges to the early martyrs; "obey, or we will deliver you up to the flames, to the beasts," &c. "We also have a Law," replied the generous combatants for the faith, "and that law is the will of God; it forbids us to adore idols, and decrees that we should remain firm in the faith, and faithful to our duties. You promise us the riches of this world if we obey, but we despise them; we seek only the treasures of heaven."

ARTICLE V.

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

AFTER the three first petitions, which relate to the glory of God, we ask of our heavenly Father all that is necessary for the daily life of the body and of the soul. God is the source of all good, and it is He who provides for all our wants both in the order of nature and in that of grace. We are all before him as poor beggars, having nothing but what we receive from his bountiful hand. "All creatures," says the prophet, speaking of God, "all creatures expect from you the food which you give them in due season: you open your hands and they are replenished with your gifts." The rich themselves are obliged to ask their bread from day to day, to acknowledge that all they possess is from the hand of God, that they hold it from his liberality, and that they may lose it in a thousand ways if he preserve it not for them. Let us observe that we ask of God, not superfluous riches, not the means of satisfying our sensuality or our pride, but merely our bread, that is to say, what is absolutely necessary for our subsistence, according to our state; again, we are only to ask it for the present day, for Our Lord forbids us to be anxious for the morrow, which we are not sure of seeing; He wills that we should repose on his Providence, and that every day we should have recourse to him, being well assured that we shall every day find him a good father, ever disposed to grant to his children whatever is necessary for them: "Be not solicitous," says He himself: "as to where you shall find eating and drink

ing for the support of your life, nor garments to cover your body; your Father who is in heaven knows that you have need of all these things. Have no care for the morrow: sufficient for the day is the evil thereon." This confidence in Providence must not, however, make us idle and presumptuous; God will not favour the indolent; but he wills that we should do all that depends on us, and when we have done our utmost, we are to confide in him, and to reckon then on the inexhaustible treasures of his Providence. The manna was given daily to the Israelites in the desert, and during forty years it never once failed them; so much for the wants of the body.

We have also a soul which requires spiritual nourishment, and it is this bread of the soul that we chiefly ask in this prayer. The food of our soul is the word of God, his divine grace, and the holy Eucharist.

The word of God nourishes our soul; it strengthens the just and makes them advance in virtue; it heals sinners and leads them back to the life of grace; it is the usual means of which God makes use to infuse into the soul and increase therein the knowledge and the love of the truths of salvation. We ought, therefore, never to neglect hearing the word of God; we ought to hear it with respect, with attention, and with a desire to profit by it.

Grace is as necessary for the life of the soul as material bread is for that of the body; it is grace that supports the soul, strengthens it, and makes it act; we have, therefore, continual need of it. God wills that we should ask it, and that every day we should renew that petition.

Finally, the holy Eucharist is the food of our soul, as Jesus Christ assures us: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, if ye eat not the flesh of the Son of man, and drink not his blood, you shall have no life in you; I am the living bread which came down from heaven; he who eateth this bread shall have life eternal." The first Christians received daily this celestial bread, and it were to be wished that we might do as they did, because the soul faints away and dies when it receives not its proper nourishment; but as the heart must be pure in order to receive the holy Eucharist, when we beg of God to give us daily the bread of life, we ask

of Him that purity of heart, which may fit us to communicate with profit.

EXAMPLE.—“Lord!” said king Solomon, “give me neither poverty nor riches; condemn me not to absolute indigence, lest my natural weakness should lead me to despair; neither give me abundant wealth, lest, that being puffed up with pride, I might fancy myself able to dispense with thy help! Give me only wherewith to live, and teach me that it is from thy bounty I have all that I possess, so that I may continually give praise to thee, who art the Lord my God!

ARTICLE VI.

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES, AS WE FORGIVE THEM WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US.

A God so good, a Father so tender should ever find in his children a perfect docility to his holy Law, together with a constant and inviolable fidelity; and nothing can be more just than that the sentiments and the conduct of men should be such towards their God. But they offend him every day: the greater number abandon him entirely, violate his Commandments in the most essential points, and outrage him by the greatest crimes. Even the just themselves frequently fall into faults which afflict the Holy Ghost; they do not indeed commit those crimes which give death to the soul and separate it from God; but they do every day things which displease him. “There is no man free from sin; and if we say that we have no sin, we are liars, and the truth is not in us.” These are the words of the Apostle St. John. Hence it is that our divine Saviour, knowing the weakness of our nature, has made it a duty for us to ask pardon of God every day, for our offences. He has only introduced this petition into the prayer he has taught us, because he desires to forgive us; he would never have prescribed it had he not intended to grant our request. But in order to make this prayer efficacious we must at least commence by repenting of our sins, for it is a principle in religion, that without contrition, no sin, whether mortal or

venial, can be remitted. God only pardons those who are sorry for having offended him, and are firmly resolved to do so no more. But we must not dispense with praying, under pretence of not having these dispositions: we must, on the contrary, ask it of God. In saying to him: "*Forgive us our trespasses*, we beg of him the grace of sincere repentance, to the end that by that means we may obtain pardon of our sins. When we have this disposition we are sure of being favourably heard, and of attaining to a perfect reconciliation with God. But would it be just to desire that God should remit our offences, whilst we pardon not our neighbour for the offences he may have committed against us? Would it be reasonable to expect that God would be indulgent towards us, and forgive us the injury we have done him, if we still wished to revenge on others the insults we have received from them. We every day say to God: *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them who trespass against us*. The pardon which we grant to others is, therefore, the measure of that which we ask of God for our own faults; if we forgive our neighbour, God will forgive us; if we refuse to pardon others, so also will God refuse to pardon us. To make this request and yet retain in our hearts any resentment towards those who have offended us, is as much as to say to God: "Do not forgive me, because I will not forgive those who have annoyed me, revenge yourself on me, because I will be revenged on them." This would be pronouncing the sentence of our own condemnation, by asking for ourselves the treatment which we give to others.

EXAMPLE.—St. John, the almoner, hearing that a certain nobleman refused to pardon an enemy, sent for him, and requested him to assist at the mass which he was just about to celebrate. As it was usual for every one present to recite the Lord's prayer, the saint made a sign to the person serving mass, to stop at the words: "*Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive*"—and the nobleman repeated them alone; then the saint turning towards him, said with firmness: "What have you done? you have pronounced your own sentence; you asked of God not to forgive you, since

you do not forgive ! The nobleman, struck with these words, prostrated himself before the altar, and promised all that the saint required, so that his reconciliation was perfect.

ARTICLE VII.

AND LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.

It is not enough that the mercy of God forgives us those sins which we have already committed ; we require that his grace should preserve us from sinning again. We are every moment exposed to sin by reason of the many temptations which assail us, and hence it is that we implore the mercy of God, saying to him : "*Lead us not into temptation* ; we supplicate him that, having respect to our weakness, he may ward off temptation from us, or otherwise give us grace to surmount it. The world, the devil, and our own concupiscence conspire for our destruction : The world tempts us by its bad example, by its discourse, and by its maxims ; the devil assails us by impressing our senses and our imagination with images which suggest to us bad thoughts and evil desires. There is no stratagem which he does not employ in order to effect our downfall ; he prowls incessantly around, seeking to devour us. Finally, concupiscence, that is to say the inclination to evil which is born with us, is ever prompting us to sin ; it follows us everywhere ; it is with us like a domestic enemy, and furnishes the world and the devil with arms to use against us with advantage. To be tempted is not a sin, but is often, on the contrary, an occasion of merit by means of the resistance we oppose to it ; but it is a sin to consent to the temptation. If, by the fear of offending God, we repress the first movements which arise within us, and if we constantly refuse to consent to the evil thing, there is no sin ; that resistance is even an act of virtue which God will one day reward ; but if we dwell on it with complacency, after its presence is observed, then it is a sin, and we become guilty. Although the temptation is in itself no sin, yet it is always attended with danger. Nevertheless, we ask not of God to be freed from all temptation ; it is inevitable in this life, which is a

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continual warfare: the greatest saints have been tempted. Our Lord himself chose to be tempted, in order to teach us how to resist and overcome temptation, and render it meritorious to us. What we ask is, that we may not be abandoned to temptation. We are so weak, that the slightest assault of the tempter is able to overthrow us; all our resource is in the grace of God; let us then beg of him to spare us those grievous temptations under which we might sink; and that, in all those whereby he is pleased to try us, he may vouchsafe to sustain us, and give us strength to come off victorious. We have nothing to fear with the help and protection of God; he is powerful enough to bring us safe through every temptation, and even make them profitable unto us. This he will do if we watch over ourselves so as not to expose ourselves rashly to danger, and if we beg the assistance of his grace in those temptations which we cannot avoid; then we fight not alone; God himself fights on our side, and our victory is secure. "God is faithful," says St. Paul, "and he will not suffer you to be tempted beyond your strength; but he will enable you to derive advantage even from temptation, to the end that you may persevere." God's word can never fail; he has promised to deliver those who hope in him, and to protect those who invoke his name. They will be attacked, but nothing shall have power to hurt them whilst God is their refuge; he will bring them victorious from the struggle; temptation will serve to perfect and to confirm their virtue, so that they may persevere even to the end.

EXAMPLES.—"Lord! the wound in your side is very large," said St. Phillip de Neri, "but if you do not prevent me, I will make it much larger by my unfaithfulness."

"Leave me not a moment to myself, oh Lord!" said another saint, "for if you do I perish."—"Where were you," said St. Catherine of Sienna, after having undergone a violent assault of the tempter,— "Where were you, O Lord?" when she seemed to hear a voice making answer—"I was in the depth of thy heart sustaining thee; it was I who gave thee so great a horror for the wicked thing that the devil suggested to thee."

ARTICLE VIII.

BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.

WE finish this prayer by begging of God that he may deliver us from evil, that is to say, from the miseries of this life, from the enemies of our salvation, and from eternal damnation. To how many evils are we not exposed in this life! With what bitterness is it not filled! Disease and pain besiege our body; trouble and anxiety, and grief attack our soul. It is with truth that the Church calls this earth on which we live a valley of tears. We ask not to be entirely free from these afflictions, for such a privilege belongs not to our present state; what we ask is, that we may be delivered from what would be to us occasions of sin, and prejudicial to our salvation. There is nothing to be regarded as a real misfortune but what would interfere with our justification in the sight of God. If infirmities, indigence, and calamities are called evils, it can only be because they disturb the soul, exposing it to impatience, murmuring and despair; because we have not sufficient virtue to support them without sin; but those ills which we bear patiently, far from being prejudicial to us, only serve to purify us, and contribute to our justification: these are rather blessings than misfortunes; however painful they may be, they are, in the order of Providence, the chastisement of sin, and the means of obtaining eternal happiness. "He must pass," says the apostle, "through many tribulations and sufferings, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven." We are permitted, nevertheless, to desire and to ask to be delivered from these evils, provided we prefer our petition in a spirit of entire resignation to the will of God, and that we be disposed to bear them with submission if God considers them necessary and useful for our salvation. By praying thus, and persevering in prayer, we shall find the true remedy for our misfortunes, and God will hear our prayers, either delivering us, or giving us strength to endure them, which is still more beneficial to us.

WE beg to be delivered from the enemies of our salvation, and in particular from the devil, who is our most cruel

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enemy. That spirit of darkness, not content with having seduced our first parents, and drawing down on their posterity a deluge of misery, never ceases to make war upon us, and lay snares for our destruction; but God restrains his fury, and prescribes to him bounds which he may not pass. Finally, we ask of God that He may deliver us from everlasting damnation, which is the height of all misfortune, the sovereign ill, the irreparable, the never-ending calamity. It is, in that abyss of wretchedness, in that miserable eternity that there is no more asking to be delivered; there the unhappy soul has to endure for ever and ever the full weight of the divine wrath and vengeance. Then is there no more redemption to hope for, no more happiness to expect, no more salvation to seek, but a collection of all imaginable miseries to be undergone, and that for all eternity. With what fervency and perseverance should we not now beg to be secured from that frightful doom!—Let us then never fail to repeat this prayer regularly, whilst we still have a chance of being heard and saved.

EXAMPLE.—The great St. Basil, archbishop of Cesarea, rather than commit a sin by obeying the commands of the emperor Valens, who was an Arian and a persecutor of the Catholics, constantly opposed his will. The emperor ordered the prefect Modestus to threaten the saint with the confiscation of his property, with banishment, torments and death, if he still refused to obey. Basil said to the prefect: "I am proof against confiscation, for I possess only a few books and the rags which cover me. For exile—whither will you banish me?—Heaven alone is my country. The torments which you may inflict upon me will not be of long duration, for I am very weak, and I shall esteem it a happiness to suffer for Christ's sake. If you think to intimidate me by threatening me with death, know that I will receive it as a great favour. To suffer all—to lose all—and to die rather than sin." The prefect went to make his report to the emperor, and said: "Prince, we are overcome; Basil fears but one thing, and that is sin."

Ecclesiastical History.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE ANGELICAL SALUTATION.

On Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

AFTER God, the worthiest object of our homage and veneration, is the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God : she was chosen before all ages to be the living temple of eternal wisdom, and the glorious instrument of the salvation of men. By her august quality of Mother of God she is elevated above all saints and angels, whose queen she is. Hence, the worship which the Church pays her is of a kind totally distinct from that which she renders to any other saint. Endowed, from her very conception, with the most excellent and divine gifts, she was a perfect model of all virtues, and the holiest of all creatures ; being exempt by a special prerogative, from all sin. Full of tenderness she is, and her heart is the heart of a mother ; we, indeed, became her children when Jesus Christ, dying on the cross, gave her as a mother to St. John, and through him to all Christians. She is, therefore, our mother ; what name more tender, more touching, more proper to inspire us for her with sentiments of entire confidence, and to make us hope for that assistance from her of which we stand most in need ? She is sensible of our misery, and her heart is softened by our wants when we expose them to her with confidence. "Never," says St. Bernard, "has any one invoked her without feeling the effects of her protection." She interests herself particularly in the salvation of young people, whose weakness she knows ; she knows the many dangers to which they are exposed ; she sees how they are attacked by the devil, the snares which he lays for them, and the efforts which he makes to deprive them of their innocence ; she protects them in a special manner when they have recourse to her. There are a thousand examples of young persons whom she has preserved from the dangers of that age. To quote but one, it was through the assistance of this queen of virgins that St. Francis of Sales, in his youth, was delivered in a moment from a dangerous

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temptation by which he had been long assailed. We may conceive how powerful is her intercession with God, if we remember that she has with him the influence of a beloved mother: her power has no bounds, because the love of Christ for his mother is infinite. Her Son, who is all-powerful, refuses nothing to the best, the tenderest of mothers; he shares, if one may say so, his authority with her, and there is no mediation nor recommendation so efficacious with Jesus Christ as that of his august mother. He has placed her as the arbitress of his treasures, and the dispenser of the graces he bestows on men; and it is his will that we should address ourselves to her to obtain any favour from Him. We ought, then, to have recourse to the Blessed Virgin with the confidence of a child who throws itself into the arms of its mother: let us have a tender devotion for her, and we shall find that none ever invoke her in vain: let us apply to her in temptation and in danger; if any dark cloud oppress our mind, or any passion agitate our heart, in our perplexities, in our troubles, let us think of her, let us have her name on our lips, and more especially in our hearts; she will console us, she will dissipate our doubts, she will calm our agitation, and sustain our weakness. If we are just she will confirm us in virtue, she will make us persevere and grow in justice. If we have had the misfortune to fall into any sin, let us quickly have recourse to that Mother of Mercy: she is the refuge of sinners, and will reconcile us with her Son. Let us pray her to obtain for us the grace of a sincere conversion. She will ask and obtain for us that powerful aid which will bring us forth from the slavery of the devil and restore us to the sweet liberty of the children of God. In whatever state we may be placed, let us consider the virtues which shine forth in her, especially her profound humility and her inviolable purity, and let us apply ourselves to follow her example. By living thus we shall be of the number of her true children, and she will be our mother; and whilst we are under her protection we can never be lost.

The most excellent prayer which we can address to the Blessed Virgin, is that of which the Church makes such frequent use, and which she almost invariably joins to the Lord's

Prayer. This prayer, so august in its simplicity, recalls to our minds the Mystery of the Incarnation; it contains in a few words, the most perfect eulogy on the Blessed Virgin; and is proper to excite our confidence by reminding us of her great influence with God, and of her great kindness and tenderness for us. This prayer is called the *Angelical Salutation*, because it commences with the words which the Angel Gabriel addressed to the Blessed Virgin, when announcing to her the Mystery of the Incarnation. "Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou amongst women." These last words were shortly after repeated by St. Elizabeth in the visit which she received from the Mother of God; she added the words:—"And blessed is the fruit of thy womb." The words which follow were added by the Church: "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us, sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen." In reciting this prayer, we ought to have the intention of thanking God for the Mystery of the Incarnation, of honouring the Blessed Virgin, who has had so great a share therein, and of testifying to her our confidence in her powerful intercession.

Hail, Holy Virgin! you have borne in your chaste womb the very author of grace, and you have received from the fulness which abides in Him, a superabundance of grace whereby you became the most perfect of all creatures. The Lord is with you by the most intimate connexion: it is from you, and of your substance that his body was formed. You were loaded with the divine blessings, and earth agrees with heaven in blessing you. The fruit of your womb is the source of that blessing which was shed over the earth, and is diffused throughout all nations. Holy Mary, Mother of God, you behold our miseries, you are sensible of our wants; pray for us now, for we are sinners; obtain for us the grace of repentance, and pardon for our sins; obtain for us the virtues of which you have given us the example, especially those of humility and purity. Pray for us at the hour of our death. We are your children; redouble your tender assistance, your efforts for us, in that terrible passage from time to eternity, and support us in that last struggle; strengthen us against the

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terrors of death; grant that we may expire while pronouncing the sacred names of Jesus and of Mary; present us yourself at the throne of your Son, who will then be our judge, and obtain for us a favourable sentence.

EXAMPLES.—A soldier named Beau-Sejour, made it a practice to repeat every day seven *Paters* and seven *Aves* in honour of the seven joys and seven sorrows of the Blessed Virgin. He was so attached to this practice that he never once failed in it; and if he sometimes happened to lay down without having said these prayers, he immediately remembered his omission, instantly arose from his bed, and kneeling down fulfilled that self-imposed duty. On one occasion Beau-Sejour was on the battle-field, and standing in the first line, in front of the enemy, awaiting the signal for the attack. Suddenly he remembered that he had not said his accustomed prayers, and making the sign of the cross, he began. His comrades, on either side, seeing him make the sign of the cross, and perceiving that he was praying, began to deride him, and raised the laugh at his expense, calling him *coward*, *poltroon*, &c. The word went round from mouth to mouth: "Beau-Sejour is afraid—he is a devotee." But he, no way disturbed by their raillery, calmly went on with his prayers. Scarcely had he finished when the enemy made a furious charge, and Beau-Sejour, without a single wound, without having received a single stroke, stood alone—of all the front rank not one escaped but he. He saw extended at his feet and on either side all those who had so lately scoffed at him and mocked his devotion. When the war was ended he received his discharge, and returned to his home safe and sound. Ever after, he never ceased to thank the Blessed Virgin for having preserved in him that devotion for her which his parents had taught him in his early youth.

New Month of Mary.

The day of Lepanto will be an eternal monument of the power of the Mother of God, since it is to her that Christendom is indebted for that famous victory which the Christians obtained over the Turks, in the year 1571. Selim, the son of Soliman, having made himself master of the

Island of Cyprus, burst on the Venetians with a powerful army, and seemed as though he was to conquer the entire world. The holy Pope Pius V., Philip II., king of Spain, and the Venetians, had joined their forces together in order to repulse the attack of the common enemy. Although the numbers of the opposing armies were very unequal, yet the Christians, relying on the protection of the Blessed Virgin doubted not that success would crown their enterprise. All Europe was in prayer. The faithful hastened in crowds to Our Lady of Loretto, to implore the assistance of Heaven, through the intercession of the Mother of God. Don Juan of Austria, the general-in-chief, made a vow to make a pilgrimage to that holy shrine. The Christians obtained what they asked; for, when the two fleets came to an engagement on the 7th of October, the enemy was defeated, and lost in that battle (which lasted from six o'clock in the morning until late in the evening), forty thousand men, one hundred and sixteen pieces of large cannon, with one hundred and fifty culverins; one hundred and eighty galleys and seventy barks went to the bottom. As soon as his affairs would permit, Don Juan of Austria, set out, though it was the depth of winter, to accomplish his vow, regardless of the inclemency of the season.

It was on this occasion that Pius the Fifth established the solemn feast of the Rosary, which was afterwards fixed by Gregory XIII. on the first Sunday of October.

Ecclesiastical History.

In the year 1683, the Turks, proud of their triumph over the Imperial army, resolved to push their conquests beyond the Danube and even across the Rhine. Already were their countless legions marching on Vienna, which city they intended to besiege. Every one fled at their approach, and the Emperor himself, Leopold the First, feeling himself unable to arrest that impetuous torrent, hastily quitted his capital. He went out by one gate just as the barbarians entered by another. Their plan was quickly formed, their camp seated, their batteries drawn up, and the trench opened on the very eve of the Assumption, was cut with fearful rapidity. To crown the misfortune, one of the

churches took fire, and the conflagration was fast gaining on the arsenal; the ammunition would of course be blown up, and an awful explosion was about to take place, the forerunner of evils still greater if possible. But Mary, continually and confidently invoked, will never abandon those who throw themselves into her arms: on the day of the Assumption the fire suddenly stopped, and hope and courage revived in hearts that were before hopeless.

The Turks, nevertheless, carried on their enterprise with incredible activity: their formidable artillery rained day and night on the city a shower of bombs and grape-shot, and their labours were so far advanced by the 31st of August, that the soldiers on both sides fought in the ditch with the stakes of the pallisades. Vienna, that rampart of Christendom, already reduced to a heap of ashes, was soon to fall under the yoke of the infidel Turk. But what may not be obtained by confiding in the Mother of God! On the feast of the Nativity, the citizens and soldiers all redoubled their prayers, and that very day intelligence arrived that prompt and unexpected succour was at hand. Soon, on the adjacent mountains, banners were seen waving; it was the great Sobieski, with his gallant Poles: their number was small, it is true, but the blessing of Heaven, drawn down by the piety of the leader and his soldiers, rendered them the scourge of the barbarians, the saviours of Vienna, and of Christendom. On the morning of the 12th, Sobieski assisted at mass, which he served himself on bended knees, his arms crossed on his breast; he received communion, placed himself and his soldiers under the protection of the Blessed Virgin—received, with them, in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff, a solemn blessing; and, being filled with a holy ardour, and with renewed confidence, he exclaimed, “Let us march now under the powerful protection of the Mother of God!”

Soon did the little army behold, spread out before them, the vast camp of the infidels, their numerous squadrons, and their thundering artillery.

The Poles were at first struck with fear, and instantly acknowledged that God alone could give them a victory; but they prayed to him with all faith, through the intercession of Mary, and already their prayers are heard. The Khan of

Tartary, terrified by the first charge of the Christians, falls back and flies with precipitation; he draws after him the Grand Vizier, who is forced to follow, though foaming with rage; the route soon becomes general; the field is covered with the dead, and the Danube engulfs thousands of the fugitives. All the baggage and artillery, even the standard of Mahomet, falls into the hands of the victors.

Sobieski, meanwhile, made his entry into Vienna with the Emperor, and, full of gratitude for the favour he had received, he himself chanted the *Te Deum* aloud. Ever after that pious Prince carried with him wherever he went an image of Our Lady of Loretto, which had been miraculously found; upon it were seen two angels, supporting a crown over the head of the Mother of God; and holding a scroll whereon was inscribed in Latin: "*By this image of Mary, John shall conquer.*"

And we also, let us doubt it not—we also shall conquer the furious enemies of our salvation, if we have recourse to the Queen of Heaven!

Ecclesiastical History.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE HAPPINESS OF A CHRISTIAN LIFE.

It is but too common to form a false idea of the Christian life, and to regard it as gloomy, painful, and cheerless. Nothing is more false, nothing more unjust, than this so widely-diffused prejudice against virtue and piety. It is important, dear children, to preserve yourselves from this dangerous error, or to get rid of it, if unhappily you have already adopted it; it is important to convince yourselves that happiness is the lot of virtue; if you doubt it, hearken to the Holy Ghost who assures you in a thousand places of the Holy Scripture, that justice, which signifies the exact fulfilment of the law of God, is ever accompanied by peace of mind and soul, and by that delicious feeling which arises from a good conscience; and consequently, that virtue, and virtue alone, renders man truly happy. Every where that He speaks of fidelity in observing the law of God, He speaks also of peace

as inseparable from righteousness; and with what energy does He explain himself on this head! "O my son!" says he, "be faithful in keeping my precepts; they shall be to thee a source of joy and peace; he who observes the law of the Lord shall make his dwelling in peace." (Prov. 13.) Observe that he does not only say, he shall find peace, he shall enjoy peace, but he shall make his dwelling in peace; he shall abide in it; he shall be, as it were, surrounded by the blessings of peace; and that peace shall be profound and abundant, for He compares it to a river, whose salutary waters flow on for ever. Hence that pure and lively joy, that solid, and lasting, and heartfelt pleasure, which is tasted only by the just. Happy is he then whose delight it is to observe the laws of God!—he shall be like a stately tree, planted by the running water, bearing excellent fruit, and unfading foliage. These are the very words of the prophet. Nor is the promise of Christ in the Gospel less formal, or less positive; he declares in clear and precise terms that his yoke is sweet and his burden light, and that they who bear it find peace of mind. It is then a truth founded on the word of God, that a Christian life is a happy life, and that true happiness is only to be found in the exact fulfilment of the law of God. This truth is also confirmed by experience. I am about to cite for you a witness, whose testimony cannot be doubted—a witness who has tried both situations, the life of a sinner and that of the just, I mean St. Augustine. Before his conversion he had led a sensual and worldly life, and had passed many years in utter forgetfulness of God, and in the indulgence of his passions. Recalled, at length, to virtue, hear what he says in the Book of his *Confessions*: "My God, thou hast broken my bonds; may my heart and my tongue praise thee for ever, because thou hast given me grace to embrace thy sweet yoke, and the light burden of thy law. How much sweetness and pleasure have I found in renouncing the vain pleasures of the world! What joy have I felt in giving up what I had most feared to lose! For thou who art the only true pleasure capable of filling a soul, in withdrawing me from those false pleasures, thou didst enter and take their place; oh! thou, the true and sovereign delight, my mind was already freed from the pier-

ing anguish arising from ambition, avarice, and the desire of plunging into the filthy pleasures of voluptuousness, and I began to taste the sweets of conversing with thee, oh, my God! who art my light, my treasure, and my salvation."

You see, my children, that a life of sin and disorder is a hard bondage, wherein one is torn by continual uneasiness; a virtuous life, on the contrary, is a life of sweetness, and full of consolation. It is true that self must be conquered, and the passions restrained; but that self-resistance costs little to a soul that has tasted God; the sacrifices made are well repaid by the testimony of a good conscience, and by that hope of eternal happiness which fills the soul with joy. What St. Augustine experienced, is also the case with all who serve God like him. Do you not know several persons who are remarkable for the faithful fulfilment of their duties? Behold that pure and innocent joy, that simple and modest gaiety, and that evenness of temper, whereby they are distinguished. The serenity of their soul is painted on their face; the profound calm which they enjoy, and the peace of their heart shine forth, if one may say so, on their brow. Undoubtedly, that calm, that blessed peace, is the fruit of virtue. But, why have recourse to foreign examples? Have you not yourselves felt the happiness that accompanies virtue? Remember that period of your youth when, touched by the grace of God, you purified your soul from sin; when admitted for the first time to the Holy Table, you experienced how sweet the Lord is to those who love him. Then your heart, disengaged from the bonds of the passions, and made pure in the sight of God, tasted but Him, desired but Him, sighed only for Him!

With what joy was your heart then filled! how delicious the peace that pervaded your soul! how sweet were the tears you shed on the bosom of so kind a Father! how you then desired to be ever in that happy state, and never to depart from it!—Confess it, and you render homage to religion!—Never, no never did you pass happier moments; that day was the fairest and the brightest of all your life. Then you understood that truth, that happiness is only to be found in serving the Lord; then you were penetrated

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with the sentiments which animated the Prophet when he said "Yes, my God, a single day passed in thy service is better than whole years in the company of sinners."

If you have preserved these sentiments of piety, that precious taste for virtue, bless the Lord for it; you are at no loss to understand what I said on the happiness of a Christian life; if, on the contrary, that virtue which formerly had so many charms for you, is now become importunate and irksome, the fault rests altogether with yourself, and your want of fidelity in the performance of your duty. If you had constantly walked in the ways of God, you would ever have enjoyed undisturbed peace. But you have still a resource,—make at once a generous resolution to observe exactly the law of God, and to repress the very first motions of reluctance. Return to your Father! a sigh disarms him, and He is appeased by a tear. You will soon feel within your soul those interior consolations and that ineffable delight which formed your happiness in the days of your innocence.

Can any one be unhappy when serving you, Oh my God, you who are the source of all good? No, Lord, no; your yoke is sweet, and your burden light. You have created us for yourself, and our heart is incessantly agitated until it reposes in you. Vainly would I seek for happiness elsewhere, for I should find but phantom pleasures which would weary my empty heart, or else real evils which would fill it with trouble and anxiety. You have told us, Oh my God, that for the wicked there is no peace: poignant remorse, continual apprehension, and consuming grief, such is their inevitable doom. He who has iniquity in his heart, has also trouble and alarm. But how different is the lot of a soul that serves you, Oh my God! it is ever tranquil, ever content, ever happy. It has, without doubt, many sacrifices to make, but the unction of your grace renders them light and easy, nay, even agreeable; it has pains to suffer, but how slight they are amid the consolations wherewith you fill it. I hesitate not, therefore, Oh Lord, to range myself on the side of virtue, persuaded as I am, that the life of the just is a thousand times more pleasant than that of the wicked. I will be faithful in the observance of your

holy law, and by that fidelity I shall procure for myself all the happiness that this earth can afford, and that perfect bliss in heaven which you reserve for those who lead a Christian life.

EXAMPLE.—At a time when a purple fever was making terrific ravages, in the capital, amongst the poor who had not time to drag themselves to the Hotel Dieu, the community of the priests of St. Marcel, being unable themselves to attend to all the dying, had called in the assistance of the begging friars. A venerable capuchin was passing along and entered a low shed where there was one lying ill of the fearful malady. He was an old man, apparently dying, and extended on some filthy rags. He was alone! a bundle of hay was his bed; not an article of furniture was visible; not even a seat; he had sold every thing in the first days of his illness to procure a little broth. On the black, discoloured wall hung a crucifix, a hatchet, and two saws. These were all his wealth, together with his arms, when he could use them, but then they were lying powerless, for he was unable to move them. "Have courage, friend," said the confessor, "this is a special grace that God now gives you; you are on the point of quitting this world, where you have had nought but pain and trouble—" "Trouble," interrupted the dying man in a faint voice, "you are entirely mistaken,—I never murmured at my lot; the sight of my crucifix consoled me in all my toil and privation—religion made me happy, and I lived content. The tools which you see there procured bread for me, and I ate it with satisfaction, without ever envying the rich, or coveting their dainty fare. I was poor, but with health and the fear of God, I never wanted any necessaries. If I recover, which I do not expect, I will return to the timber-yard, and continue to bless the hand of God which has hitherto preserved me. Oh Father! how lovely is religion—and what precious treasures it contains: peace, contentment, and happiness, are the lot of those who love it."

The confessor, as edified as surprised by such language, could not refrain from expressing his astonishment; and after returning thanks to God for the favour of conduct—

ing him to that wretched hovel he said to the sick man. "Although this life has not been painful to you, you must nevertheless make up your mind to leave it, for the will of God must be obeyed." "Certainly," replied the dying man, with a firm voice, and an animated look, "every one must go in their turn; I knew how to live, and I know how to die: I thank God for having given me life and for bringing me through death to reign with Him. I feel my last moment approaching, so you will please to give me the rites of the Church, for that is all I want now." That man died as he had lived, a child of grace, leaving his confessor and neighbours who witnessed his death full of admiration for the power of Religion over a heart that is docile to the suggestions of grace.

THE END.

A PROFESSION OF FAITH.

1. I BELIEVE that there is but one God, and that there could not be more than one.
2. I believe that there are three persons in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, these three persons being but one God, and not three, because they have but one and the same nature and divinity.
3. I believe that the Son of God, the second person of the most Holy Trinity, was made man for love of us, and died on a cross to satisfy God for our sins, to deliver us from the pains of hell, and to merit for us eternal life.
4. I believe that they who have lived well while in this world, and died in the state of grace, shall be rewarded, after death, with eternal bliss in heaven, where they shall see God as He really is.
5. I believe that they who have lived badly, and died in mortal sin, shall be damned, that is to say, deprived of the sight of God, and left to burn in hell for all eternity.

6. I believe that there are ten commandments of God, and that we are bound to observe them all ; I believe also that we are to obey the Church, whose commandments are usually six in number.

7. I believe that it is sufficient to have committed one mortal sin and die in that state to be consigned to eternal torment.

8. I believe that it is necessary often to have recourse to prayer, and that one cannot be saved without praying to God.

9. I believe that there are seven Sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Penance, Eucharist, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

10. I believe that Baptism effaces both Original and Actual Sin, and makes us Christians ; that Penance remits the sins committed after Baptism ; and that the Eucharist really contains the body and blood, soul and divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine.

PIOUS PRACTICES.

A TRUE child of Mary applies himself to fulfil with fidelity the duties of a good Christian, and to that end he should observe what follows:—

1. He will often have recourse to prayer in his necessities, and will never fail to say devoutly his morning and evening prayers, and to assist at the Holy Mass every day, if it be possible.

2. He will say every day some prayers in honour of Mary, such as the *Memorare*, (the prayer of St. Bernard,) the *Salve Regina*, or a decade of the Rosary.

3. Every day he will read a portion of some pious book, such as the Holy Gospel, the Imitation of Christ, or the Lives of the Saints, and take care to avoid reading any bad books. He will every day give to his parents some marks of respect.

4. He will only associate with prudent friends, and will shun libertines as he would serpents.

5. He will try to quit the state of mortal sin, if he has had the misfortune to fall into it.

6. On Sundays and holy days he will assist with devotion at the Holy Mass, and the other offices of the Church. He will confess and receive Communion, at least once a month according to the advice of his Confessor; and on the day of his Communion he will say a *Pater* and an *Ave* for the living and the dead belonging to the Church.

7. Lastly, he will never forget that he is on the earth only to serve God, and that his eternal happiness or eternal misery depends on the performance of that duty.

Praised and glorified for ever be the adorable Sacrament of the Altar!

PRAYER

TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Most Holy Mother of God! humbly prostrate at thy sacred feet, I offer myself to thee, as the protectress of my youth; I present to thee my homage and my love as the Queen of Angels and of men; I revere thee as the Mother of the Incarnate Word. I will now choose thee as my mother, in order to obtain by thy powerful intercession all the assistance of which I stand in need in the troubles and afflictions which may befall me. Preserve me, oh sacred Virgin! from all evil, and especially from sin, which would deprive me of the happiness of seeing thee, loving thee, and contemplating thee in the regions of bliss, where I beg of thee to prepare for me a place. Amen.

Blessed be the Immaculate Conception of the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

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